Vegan Menus for adults 51+

by Christine Kasum Sexton, MPH

On the next pages, you will find a selection of easy-to-prepare menus designed specifically for older vegans (51+ years). Four different calorie levels – 1600, 1800, 2000, and 2200 – are presented in order to meet the needs of men and women of varying activity levels and budgets. In general, a 1600-calorie diet should meet the needs of an inactive older female; an 1800-calorie diet should meet the needs of an active older female; a 2000-calorie diet should meet the needs of an active older male; and a 2200 calorie diet should meet the needs of an older active male. These are average numbers, however. If you are more active, you may need more calories. If you find that you are losing weight unintentionally, you should add additional servings of foods. If you are gaining weight unintentionally, you may need to increase activity or choose a lower calorie level.

In addition to a range of calorie levels, we have provided one set of menus with higher food costs, and one set with lower food costs. In general, the higher food cost menus include more vegan convenience foods such as soy burgers and vegan deli slices, as well as more fresh fruits and vegetables, while the lower cost menus include more beans and canned foods, and rely on frozen vegetables and juice. All of these menus were analyzed for nutritional content and meet the U.S. dietary reference intake levels for most nutrients. Some suggestions that you prefer could also be used without significantly altering the calorie count. For example, you could replace the garlic and ginger in tofu stir-fry with onions and turmeric, or cayenne pepper. The parsley-walnut sauce for pasta could be made with roasted soybeans, sesame seeds, or chickpeas. The parsley-walnut sauce for pasta could be made with roasted sunflower seeds, or a simple soy sauce sauce could be used and then topped with white beans.

These menus can also be adapted based on seasonal food availability, for people with food allergies, or those who need softer foods. Fresh produce in the menus can be swapped for any fruits and vegetables that are seasonally available. This will not only help to provide variety and adjust for your own personal tastes, but can also reduce cost by using items that are abundant at the time. For example, for fruit snacks, choose any fresh berries that you enjoy more often in the springtime, and apples or pears more often in the fall. Similarly, you might choose spinach or lettuce more often in the early summer, zucchini more often in the late summer, and frozen green vegetables more often during the winter months. As long as you are choosing a comparable serving size of fruits or vegetables, the menus should still be nutritionally adequate.

For additional information on diets using softer foods, see the article “Texture Alterations for Vegan Diets,” by Chef and Registered Dietitian Nancy Berkoff at http://www.vrg.org/seniors.


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Day 1 1600 calories

**Breakfast:**
1/2 cup oatmeal, cooked, with an optional sprinkle of cinnamon
½ banana

**Morning Snack:**
4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
½ apple

**Lunch:**
½ cup grapes or other fruit
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Hummus wrap made with:**
• Whole wheat tortilla
• 1/4 cup chopped raw red pepper
• 2 slices avocado
• 1/4 cup hummus

**Afternoon Snack:**
½ cup sliced raw carrots
1 cup calcium-enriched soy yogurt
½ ounce no-salt dry roasted almonds

**Dinner:**
Tofu/veggie stir-fry made with:
• 1 cup cooked brown rice (no salt or fat added)
• 1/4 cup cooked Swiss chard
• 1/4 cup cooked mushrooms
• 1/4 cup calcium-enriched tofu
• 2 teaspoons olive oil
• 1 clove garlic, minced and 1/2 teaspoon ginger, minced (or other spices or low-sodium broth)
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 1 1600 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
1/2 cup oatmeal, cooked, with an optional sprinkle of cinnamon
1 small banana

**Morning Snack:**
4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
1 Tablespoon salt-free peanut butter
½ apple

**Lunch:**
Wrap made with:
• 8-inch flour tortilla
• 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
• 1/4 cup chopped onion, cooked in 1 teaspoon canola oil
• 1/2 cup garbanzo beans, mashed, no salt added
• 1/2 cup frozen or canned mandarin oranges, drained
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
½ cup sliced raw carrots
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Dinner:**
Tofu/veggie stir-fry made with:
• 1 cup cooked brown rice (no salt or fat added)
• 1 cup mixed vegetables, cooked with vegetable oil
• 1/4 cup calcium-enriched tofu
• 1 teaspoon olive oil
• 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or other seasoning of choice)
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 2 1600 calories

**Breakfast:**
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
1 cup shredded wheat cereal
½ cup pineapple or other seasonal fruit
½ cup cantaloupe or other seasonal fruit

**Lunch:**
Sandwich made with:
• 2 slices whole wheat bread
• 1/4 cup alfalfa sprouts
• 4 slices avocado
• 2 meatless turkey slices
1 cup rice or soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
¾ cup thin stick, hard, unsalted pretzels
6 baby carrots

**Dinner:**
Pasta with parsley-walnut sauce made with:
• 1¼ cups cooked whole wheat spaghetti
• 1/2 clove garlic, minced
• 2 Tablespoons walnuts
• 2 Tablespoons parsley
Sautéed in 1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 cup cooked kale

Day 2 1600 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
¾ cup cooked shredded wheat cereal
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
½ cup orange juice, reconstituted from frozen
1 small apple
2 Tablespoons sunflower seeds, dry-roasted

**Lunch:**
Peanut butter-banana sandwich made with:
• 2 slices whole wheat bread
• 2 Tablespoons peanut butter
• ½ medium banana
½ cup orange juice, reconstituted from frozen
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
¾ cup thin stick, hard, unsalted pretzels
½ cup sliced raw carrots

**Dinner:**
Lentil soup made with:
• ¼ cup lentils
• ¼ cup onion and ¼ cup carrot, cooked in 1 teaspoon canola oil
• ½ cup mixed vegetables, cooked with vegetable oil
• Spices (thyme, black pepper, bay leaves)
1 medium baked or microwaved potato, with black pepper, fresh or dried parsley, or other low-sodium seasonings
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
# Day 1 1800 calories

**Breakfast:**
- ¾ cup oatmeal, cooked, with an optional sprinkle of cinnamon
- ¾ cup raisins
- ½ cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Morning Snack:**
- 4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
- 1 medium apple

**Lunch:**
- Hummus wrap made with:
  - 1½-ounce whole wheat tortilla
  - 1 cup fresh spinach
  - ½ cup chopped red pepper
  - 3 slices avocado
  - ½ cup sliced cucumber
  - 5 Tablespoons hummus
- ½ cup grapes or other seasonal fruit
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
- ½ cup sliced raw carrots
- 1 cup calcium-enriched soy yogurt

**Dinner:**
- Seitan/veggie stir-fry made with:
  - 1 cup cooked brown rice
  - ¾ cup cooked Swiss chard
  - ½ cup cooked mushrooms
  - ½ cup seitan strips
  - 2 teaspoons olive oil
  - 1 clove garlic, minced
  - ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

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# Day 2 1800 calories

**Breakfast:**
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
- 1 cup shredded wheat cereal
- ½ cup orange juice (freshly-squeezed, if desired)

**Morning Snack:**
- 1 medium apple
- 2 Tablespoons sunflower seeds, dry-roasted

**Lunch:**
- Peanut butter-banana sandwich made with:
  - 2 slices whole wheat bread
  - 2 Tablespoons peanut butter
  - ½ large banana
- 1 cup broccoli, from frozen
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
- 8 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
- ½ cup sliced raw carrots

**Dinner:**
- Lentil soup made with:
  - ½ cups lentils
  - ½ cup chopped onion and ¼ cup sliced carrot, cooked in 1 teaspoon canola oil
  - 1¼ cups water
  - Spices (thyme, black pepper, bay leaves)
  - ¼ cup oyster crackers
- 1 large baked or microwaved potato, with black pepper, fresh or dried parsley, or other low-sodium seasonings
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

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# Day 1 1800 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
- ½ cup oatmeal, cooked, with an optional sprinkle of cinnamon
- ½ medium banana
- ¼ cup raisins
- ½ cup orange juice, reconstituted from frozen

**Morning Snack:**
- 4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
- 1 Tablespoon peanut butter, no salt
- ½ apple

**Lunch:**
- Wrap made with:
  - 10-inch flat tortilla
  - ½ cup green pepper, chopped and cooked
  - ½ cup chopped onion, cooked in 1 teaspoon canola oil
  - ½ cup garbanzo beans, mashed, no salt added
  - ½ cup canned, low-sodium green beans
  - ½ cup frozen or canned mandarin orange, drained
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
- ½ cup sliced raw carrots
- 1 cup calcium-enriched soy yogurt

**Dinner:**
- Tofu/veggie stir-fry made with:
  - 1 cup cooked brown rice (no salt or fat added)
  - 1 cup canned, low-sodium mixed vegetables, cooked with vegetable oil
  - ¼ cup calcium-enriched tofu cooked in 1 teaspoon canola oil
  - 1 clove garlic, minced and ½ teaspoon minced ginger (or other spices or low-sodium broth)
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

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# Day 2 1800 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
- 1 cup shredded wheat cereal
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
- ½ cup orange juice (freshly-squeezed, if desired)

**Morning Snack:**
- 1 medium apple
- 2 Tablespoons sunflower seeds, dry-roasted

**Lunch:**
- Sandwich made with:
  - 2 slices whole wheat bread
  - 2 meatless turkey slices
  - ¼ cup alfalfa sprouts
  - 4 slices avocado
- 1 cup broccoli, from frozen
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
- 8 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
- ½ cup sliced raw carrots

**Dinner:**
- Pasta with parsley-walnut sauce made with:
  - ½ cups cooked whole wheat spaghetti
  - ½ clove garlic, minced
  - 3 Tablespoons walnuts
  - 2 Tablespoons parsley
  - Sanitized in 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup cooked kale
- 1 cup rice or soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
Day 1 2000 calories

**Breakfast:**
1 mini (1-ounce) whole wheat bagel
1 ½ Tablespoons peanut butter, reduced-sodium and reduced-sugar
1 cup calcium-enriched soy yogurt

**Morning Snack:**
1 large banana
½ cup soymilk, enriched with calcium and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
6 baby carrots

**Lunch:**
2-ounce whole wheat bun with:
- 1 vegan hot dog
- ¼ cup chopped tomatoes
½ cup whole strawberries or other seasonal fruit
1 cup broccoli
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Dinner:**
Seitan/veggie stir-fry made with:
- 1¼ cups cooked brown rice (no salt added)
- 1 cup spinach
- ¼ cup snow peas
- ¼ cup sliced mushrooms
- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 Tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 large orange
1 cup rice or soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 2 2000 calories

**Breakfast:**
Smoothie made with:
- 1 medium banana
- ½ cup strawberries or other seasonal fruit
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Lunch:**
Salad made with:
- ½ cup vegan croutons
- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 1 cup red or green leaf lettuce
- ¼ cup raw red pepper slices
- ¼ cup sliced cucumbers
- ¼ cup garbanzo beans (canned, low-sodium, drained)

**Afternoon Snack:**
1-ounce bag hard, no-salt pretzels
½ cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 1 2000 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
1 slice whole wheat bread
1 ½ Tablespoons peanut butter, no-salt added
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Morning Snack:**
1 large banana
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
½ cup sliced carrots

**Lunch:**
Pasta with broccoli and chickpeas made with:
- 1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta
- 1 cup broccoli, from frozen
- ½ cup pasta sauce with 2 teaspoons canola oil
- ½ cup garbanzo beans, canned, drained
- 1 large apple
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 2 2000 calories lower cost

**Breakfast:**
Smoothie made with:
- ½ cup frozen berries
- ½ banana
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12
- ½ cup calcium-enriched tofu

**Lunch:**
Pasta with veggies, made with:
- 1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta
- ½ cup cooked spinach, from frozen
- ½ cup cooked carrots, from frozen
- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Afternoon Snack:**
1 ounce low-fat, unsalted tortilla chips
½ cup pinto beans, unsalted, mashed with 1 Tablespoon salsa
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

**Dinner:**
Eggless banana pancakes with:
- 1 banana
- ¼ cup rolled oats
- ¼ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ cup water
- 1 teaspoon oil
1 cup mashed sweet potato or winter squash (cooked from frozen)
¼ cup walnuts
Day 1 2200 calories

Breakfast:
1 cup oatmeal, cooked, with an optional sprinkle of cinnamon
¼ cup raisins
1 mini (1-ounce) whole wheat bagel with:
• 2 Tablespoons peanut butter, reduced-salt, reduced-sugar
1 cup grapefruit juice (freshly squeezed, if desired)

Morning Snack:
1 large banana
1 cup calcium-enriched soy yogurt

Lunch:
2-ounce whole wheat bun with
• 1 vegan hot dog
• ¼ cup chopped tomatoes
1 cup broccoli
1 cup soy milk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Afternoon Snack:
4 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
6 baby carrots
½ cup raw cauliflower

Dinner:
Seitan/veggie stir-fry made with:
• 1¼ cups cooked brown rice (no salt added)
• 1 cup spinach
• ½ cup chopped snow peas
• ¼ cup sliced mushrooms
• ½ cup seitan strips
• 2 teaspoons canola oil
• ½ teaspoon garlic, minced
• 1 large orange
1 cup rice or soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 1 2200 calories lower cost

Breakfast:
1 slice whole wheat bread
2 Tablespoons peanut butter, no salt added
1 cup orange juice, reconstituted from frozen

Morning Snack:
1 large banana
1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Lunch:
Black beans and rice made with:
• ¼ cup cooked brown rice
• 1 teaspoon canola oil
• ½ cup black beans
½ cup chopped spinach, cooked from frozen
½ cup cauliflower, cooked from frozen
1 cup soy milk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Afternoon Snack:
6 whole wheat, low-sodium crackers
½ cup sliced carrots

Dinner:
Pasta with veggies & chickpeas made with:
• 1½ cups cooked whole wheat pasta
• 1 cup broccoli, from frozen
• ½ cup pasta sauce with 2 teaspoons canola oil
• ½ cup garbanzo beans, canned, drained
1 large apple
1 cup soy milk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 2 2200 calories

Breakfast:
Smoothe made with:
• 1 medium banana
• ½ cup strawberries or other seasonal fruit
• ½ cup calcium-enriched tofu
• 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
• 1 cup soy milk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Afternoon Snack:
2 ounces hard, unsalted pretzels
½ cup soy milk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Dinner:
1 whole wheat hamburger roll
1 vegan/soy burger
2 slices tomato
½ cup cooked couscous
1 cup cooked broccoli
1 cup chopped cantaloupe or other seasonal fruit
1 cup rice or soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Day 2 2200 calories lower cost

Breakfast:
Smoothie made with:
• ½ cup frozen berries
• ½ banana
• 1 cup soymilk, enriched with calcium, and vitamins A, D, E, and B12

Morning Snack:
2 ounces lowfat, unsalted tortilla chips
1 cup soymilk (as above)
½ cup pinto beans, unsalted, mashed with 2 Tablespoons salsa

Lunch:
Pasta with veggies, made with:
• 1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta
• ½ cup pasta sauce with 2 teaspoons canola oil
• 1 Tablespoon maple syrup or other vegan sweetener

Morning Snack:
2 ounces lowfat, unsalted tortilla chips
1 cup soymilk (as above)
½ cup pinto beans, unsalted, mashed with 2 Tablespoons salsa

Dinner:
Eggless banana pancakes with:
• 1 banana
• ½ cup rolled oats
• ½ cup whole-wheat flour
• ½ teaspoon baking powder
• ½ cup water
1 teaspoon oil
1 cup mashed sweet potato or winter squash (cooked from frozen)
½ ounce walnuts