

WHAT ARE PLANT-BASED DIETS?

Plant-based diets are a growing trend, but what, exactly, are they?

kinds

There are many kinds of plant-based diets, from contemporary to traditional. There are Mediterranean, Asian and rural African diets, which limit the frequency or quantity of meats and/or dairy but are not strictly vegetarian. Six kinds of vegetarian diets are common in Western countries today:

Semi-vegetarian. Red meat, poultry and fish are restricted from once per month to no more than once per week. There is no limit on eggs and dairy.

Pesco vegetarian. Red meat and poultry are consumed less than once per month, but some fish and/or seafood are consumed more often.

Lacto-ovo vegetarian. Red meat, poultry and fish are excluded, but variable amounts of eggs and/or dairy may be consumed.

Vegan. A vegan diet is 100 per cent plant-based, meaning no meats, dairy, fish or eggs. Very strict vegans may even abstain from honey and the use of leather, depending on the reason for the veganism. The term vegan is often a code word for a whole way of life.

Macrobiotic. The macrobiotic diet centres on whole grains such as brown rice supplying 50 to 60 per cent of each meal, with plenty of vegetables

and some beans (or soy products). Meat, poultry, eggs and dairy are usually excluded, but seafood is consumed up to several times per week.

Raw. Raw plant-based diets avoid cooking with heat and use other innovative preparation techniques to make foods more palatable and digestible. They are most commonly vegan and include 75 per cent or more raw food by weight.

how you can benefit

Plant-based diets have been linked to a lower rate of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers, and even to greater longevity. What they share in common is that all or a majority of what fills your plate comes from plants. You reap the most benefits when these plants are unrefined.

