

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 21-Day Challenge



## **What if I don't have a fully stocked pantry already?**

What an opportunity! This is the time to commit to getting your house in order to accommodate this lifestyle. We have to get through the initial changes and first steps in order to make this lifestyle more of a smooth transition. And I suggest that having a stocked pantry with lots of options on a daily basis can be a first motivator towards success. Consider investing in the items on the pantry list to start, and build as you go. Once you've gotten a start with stocking up, you will only have to buy a few things at a time going forward.

## **What if I've never tried to do the Nutritarian diet before?**

No problem! I highly recommend that you read Eat to Live at some point so you know more about the Why, but with the Challenge materials and the Facebook group, you should have all the support you need to conquer this 21 days. It's all laid out with you in mind.

## **Is this plan for beginners or intermediate Nutritarians?**

It's for anyone who wants to change things up, and learn a whole new way to Eat to Live, as well as learning quantities for healthy weight-loss and satiety, and not having to think about anything else! It will work for beginners and experienced Nutritarians alike.

## **My smoothie is too thick: can I add water to it?**

Absolutely. Water is a great thinner.

## **What if I can't eat a cold/hot meal in the winter/summer?**

This is something you're just going to have to get used to. :) I know it can be difficult to have cold smoothies during winter or hot soups in the summer (I see you NZ/AUS:), but being able to eat what needs to be eaten will go a long way towards toughening you up on other days where we don't want to eat something "just because we don't feel like it." (I've had so many days like this!) Make sure to not lose out on nutrition from feeling a little cold or hot. Jumping jacks and sweaters (or fans and air conditioning!) can help that too. Ha!

## **Do I measure greens before or after chopping them?**

After.

## **Do I measure grains before or after cooking them?**

After.

## **Can men or those who are very athletic eat more?**

Yes. Men, pregnant or nursing women, or anyone who is very athletic can have an extra serving of a limited food, like 1 cup grains, or another cup of beans, etc, if they need it. Feel free to add in more if you are SUPER athletic -- it will be up to all of you to find your happy medium between satiety and weight-loss (if weight-loss is desired). If women who aren't super active find themselves still hungry when a meal is finished, a cup or more of non-starchy vegetables, raw or cooked, is a great substitute and can be used (with meals) any time when it's needed. And often, this is the hardest part of starting this lifestyle: confusing toxic hunger/withdrawal from true hunger. [Read this article for more info.](#)

## **How can I take meals with me to work?**

If you have a job where you work out of the house, then you are going to want to keep a good eye on the next day or two's plan, so you can be prepared for what effort you're going to have to put in, in the way of prepping and cooking ahead of time.

You will also want to prepare your day's meals in advance so you can be sure to always have food on hand for the work day. And if you happen to be too out-and-about or in a job where it's hard to have a 30+ minute lunch (if it doesn't take that long to eat your salad, then your salad isn't big enough:), then you can consider swapping dinner with lunch, or changing portions around, etc. This plan is very flexible like this, as long as you stick to the original quantities.

I highly recommend a set of great bowls with lids and smoothie containers with lids, etc to get you started.

## **Wait, warm smoothies? What?!**

In case there are any "warm smoothies" included on this particular Challenge:

I created the concept of warm smoothies so I could still get my greens in in the winter mornings and not freeze to death in the process. :) Many people on the first challenge thought they wouldn't like them either, but they ended up loving them. So give them a try! No problem at all though, to just drink them cold, if you like that better.

The thing is, you do need a blender that can blend fast enough over a couple minutes to actually warm it up and I recommend the high-powered Vitamix for this (see notes below on kitchen tools). But if you just have a standard blender, that's ok: you'll just need to microwave it for a bit to get it warm.

But do give the warm smoothies a try when you have the chance and see if you like them. Worst case, you can have them cold, and they taste just as awesome, or even awesome-er. ;) If you drink them cold, you can plan your shower for after you have your smoothie in the morning, if you live in a cold area at the time you're doing this.

This way you can have your greens and eat them, too, no matter what the temperature is outside.

### **Should I Buy Organic or Not?**

A good rule of thumb is to buy organic when something has a thin skin, or when you will eat the skin. You can also check out the [EWG's list of Dirty Dozen foods](#) to make sure you're getting the best organic foods possible.

Interestingly, Dr. Fuhrman has said that it is more important to eat vegetables than to not eat them because they are not organic, so keep this in mind.

Also: when choosing berries, Dr. Fuhrman has said that it is ok on occasion to get non-organic berries if they are frozen, since these will have less pesticides and fungicides due to the way they are grown and processed. Berries tend to be very expensive in the winter, so frozen is a great way to go in this respect. Organic if you can, but non-organic is ok occasionally when they are frozen.

### **What if I'm not losing weight?**

For some people, it just takes a while. One of my challengers from the first round in January 2019 reported that she followed it faithfully and it took 12 days for weight loss to start.

Also, be super honest: are you REALLY following the plan exactly as I have laid it out? No snacking? No outside foods? If you answer yes, then you may just need to remove some of the grains or nut butter and replace with greens or other non-starchy veggies. That way you still get bulk and fiber with less calories. No starving here! Consider tweaking your meals to focus more towards greens and non-starchy veggies. Sometimes a tiny tweak is all it takes, but also just give it a try as it's written and see how you do. Some of us just take longer to release weight than others.

Our weight depends on soooo many factors. It is possible to not lose any weight for several days and that would be totally normal. Just trust the process and realize that no matter what happens with your weight, you are doing an amazing thing for your body by feeding it such varied, high-nutrient food.

### **What is “finishing” a soup or meal?**

This refers to what I do after I’ve made a soup. For each portion I go to eat, I add various things to up the flavor, [like I demonstrate in this YouTube video](#).

### **I’m worried about not having a “real” dinner.**

I know it may seem a little spartan at first, but just trust me and give these meals a go. You may even feel too full for dinner at all: many Challengers reported just that. Otherwise, feel free to eat half of your lunch at lunchtime and save the rest for dinner.



### **What if I have a previous engagement like a special occasion, a work conference, travel, a vacation or a restaurant outing during the 21 days?**

Do what you can to get out of previous engagements to set yourself up in the beginning the strongest way possible. But that being said, just do your very best to stick on plan. If

you cannot, my advice is to pick up the eating plan right where everyone else is after your event, and tack those days you missed onto the end of your challenge so you can keep up with the group.

So many Challengers on previous challenges has reported excellent success with their Challenge, even while traveling/roadtrips/difficult life circumstances. It can be done. It's all about commitment.

### **This is more money spent than I'm used to.**

One thing I like to say to this is: "Did you really add up the difference?" I know for me personally, that I spend the same or a lot less sometimes, because I am eating out at restaurants sooooo much less than I used to, as well as not snacking ever: so I'm not going out to Starbucks or looking for snacks at gas stations, etc, everywhere I go. I don't have any of those last-minute checkout aisle purchases, etc. And lastly think of the doctors bills that you won't accrue over time: worth every penny now.

### **What if I can't find a specific ingredient?**

I have tried to mention some alternatives throughout the challenge, but if you can't find something, it's generally fine to swap it out for a similar ingredient (like walnuts instead of hemp seeds, for instance. Kale instead of cabbage, etc.) Just try to stay in the same category. Like beans for beans, not grains for beans. And keep in mind if your greens swaps are amongst cruciferous greens or not, so you make sure to get the same nutrition.

### **What if I don't like a specific ingredient?**

Not a problem. Just swap it out for another ingredient you like in the same category. For instance, if you don't like arugula, just pick another cruciferous veggie. If you don't like pecans, use pistachios instead, or something like that. Just don't replace lower calorie foods with higher calorie ones.

But there is also something to be said for giving each new item a go for just this 21 days. You may be surprised to find that you like something you've never tried before, or that you like something now that you always thought you didn't like. Some have said that it can take someone (namely children) 16-20 times to try a new thing before they like it, and I have seen this happen to myself with so many things I used to think I didn't like (more on this below).

Try to keep an open mind and give new things a shot, at least a couple of times. You can always make a judgment then, but if you're harboring thoughts of foods you haven't liked since you were much younger...my friend, it's time to try again. :)

### **What if I have to cook for my family and myself? How can this be done for couples or families with children?**

I've seen some families brilliantly use meal planning/delivery services like Blue Apron to cook for family while still making food for themselves. Also, you can try to make Nutritarian meals and just add meat and dairy to the meals on the side, so everyone can get healthy foods as well as the SAD foods.

One thing to keep in mind is that generally children will need more calories from heavier foods like fats and starches than this plan will provide, so I am recommending this Challenge mainly for adults who are looking to lose weight or maintain with a Nutritarian lifestyle. Feel free to serve the same meals to children, but then add in more bulk if needed with higher calorie, whole plant foods.

### **This isn't going to be enough food. I'm worried I'm going to be hungry all the time.**

This is a VERY common worry in the beginning! Trust and have faith in the process. I have designed this Challenge to give you an abundance of food while still helping you lose weight. If this concept feels unfamiliar well, welcome to being a Nutritarian! Yes salads should take at least 30 minutes to eat (even more!) and oftentimes, Challengers from January reported that it was simply too much food. Feel free to save meals for later, freeze leftovers, etc.

### **What if I have lots of bloating and gas?**

This is a common issue in the beginning for many as we are not used to eating so many raw greens and veggies. The reason this happens is because our guts are not yet accustomed to breaking down these types of foods, so our digestive tract has to build up the proper bacteria to accomplish this...but we can only do that by taking in these specific foods. So the best advice, if you're really struggling, is to build up slower, especially with beans. Reduce bean quantity each day and build up as you go. Replace the foods you are not eating with more non-starchy veggies and you won't get hungry.

But remember that in order for this to get better you MUST eat the foods every day. Most people see resolution after just a few weeks.

### **The recipes take me too long to make.**

I understand that this lifestyle takes a lot of getting used to for a lot of reasons. Just know that you will get better and better over time at creating these foods in your kitchen and your prep and cooking time will go so much faster as you get more and more experienced. These meals are fairly simple to make, though it may be more work and/or time than ordering fast food delivery. So if you're used to that, just realize there will be some adjustment period. With the way I split up the prep, you should find that it really isn't that much time once you get used to it.

### **What if I have leftovers or unused groceries?**

Feel free to repeat days if you need to to use up certain items. You can freeze soups or other certain meals to eat at a later time. Once you get used to the quantity that you are satiated with, you will be better able to regulate how much to eat over time.

### **I don't want to eat the same thing for 3 days in a row.**

Keep in mind that the reason behind the 3 Day Sets is so that you will avoid overwhelm of not having to make 3 new things each day with busy schedules and busy lives. The other benefit is that you will get really good at preparing those meals, increasing your speed and familiarity with Nutritarian cooking methods. Also: this was the most common objection from the original Challenge group, and by the end, most were convinced that this was the true key to their success. So give it a try for a while with an open mind and see if it truly works or not. And by all means, if you decide that it's just not your speed, feel free to switch over to a 2-day plan, if you like. Just know the grocery lists won't be accurate.

### **What if I don't like a meal? Can I swap meals out?**

As I've said above: studies have shown that it can take 16-20 times on average (or more!) for us to like a food that we have previously disliked. So if you aren't a fan of kale or arugula yet, this is more likely due to the fact that you don't have enough experience with it and your tastebuds aren't adjusted to ETL foods yet, rather than some hard and fast rule like, "I just do not like it."

Please try, just for this 21 days, to give all the recipes a go. I have heard from countless people on the first challenge telling me how surprised they were that they ended up liking foods they previously thought they disliked. For example, I myself didn't start liking bananas until I'd given up super sweet dried fruits for good earlier this year. Just a few days later, I started noticing I found bananas much more tolerable, after about 15 years of hating them but eating them anyway because of how sweet they make smoothies. You never know what you may come to like.

This being said, yes, any meal is interchangeable with another meal within the same meal category (e.g. breakfasts can be swapped with breakfasts, lunches with lunches, etc), but just keep in mind that putting things out of order from how I have it laid out might alter whether or not you're getting in all your G-BOMBS each day.

### **What if I think a meal is bland?**

First, I want to say, keep in mind that not every meal that you eat needs to be at the taste level of a birthday party. :) This is a strange new concept for most of us to accept, but we do not have to have our minds blown with every bite. Remember, we eat to live, not live to eat.

Another thing is that you may consider, if you're just starting out, that your tastebuds aren't adjusted yet to the level of lower salt. It's important to give them time to adjust, but it can take a while (weeks or MORE!).

I also have [some great ideas that you can use to add more flavor from a video I did about Soup](#). These tips are applicable to most meals so experiment with mixing some of these flavors to get what you're looking for.

### **I have strong cravings. What do I do?**

Strong cravings can be a tough thing to get through, for sure. But see if you can just work to make it through these 21 days and observe where this takes you on your journey. Accomplishing a challenge like this will give you more confidence in your future ability as well, and if you can do 21 days at a time, then you can make some great progress in the future with accomplishing larger tasks. Use challenges as periods of strictness to accomplish goals little by little.

One of the first steps out of cravings is to acknowledge that they are normal, that you will continue to get them (it's human) and that you don't have to do whatever they tell you. Welcome them with open arms, because they're not going anywhere, but don't let them sway you from your goals. You can have cravings and just observe them and be curious without feeding them.

Also, check out the Mindset Bonus PDF and other sections of this Challenge that discuss mindset and really make an effort and commitment to improve your responses to your cravings.

And the best news is that Nutritarian food actually helps heal us and blunts our current cravings, so just keep eating that amazing food and watch yourself heal over time!