

Meal Planning

USING THE PLATE METHOD

What is the Plate Method?

The Plate Method is an easy way to plan meals and can help control portions, calories, and carbohydrates. This is especially helpful for people diagnosed with diabetes. This approach is based on dividing your plate into 3 sections: mostly non-starchy vegetables and smaller amounts of starchy foods and proteins. This way of eating can be applied when dining out, during holiday gatherings, special occasions, and most importantly, at home.

How does it work?

1. Divide your plate into 3 sections: Draw an imaginary line from top to bottom. On the other half, draw an imaginary line from the center line to the side of the plate.
2. Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate (50%) with non-starchy vegetables such as:
 - Spinach, kale, salad greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, asparagus, green beans, beets, cucumbers, peppers, carrots
3. Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate with grains and starchy foods such as:
 - Whole grain breads, high fiber cereal, oats, barley, quinoa, grits/polenta, pasta, brown rice, tortillas
 - Beans, peas, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash
4. Fill the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of plate with protein such as:
 - Tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers, seitan
 - Eggs, cottage cheese, low-fat cheese
 - White meat chicken and turkey, no skin
 - Fresh water fish and shellfish
 - Lean beef and lean pork
5. Add a piece of fruit, and a glass of milk at each meal
6. Add healthy fats in small amounts such as.
 - Olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocados,

Vegetables at Breakfast?

Many of us don't eat non-starchy vegetables at breakfast. However, it's a good general rule to include foods from several food groups. Ways to add vegetables to your first meal of the day:

- Add greens to your smoothie
- Add sautéed peppers, mushrooms, onions to eggs or omelet.
- Place poached eggs on asparagus spears.
- Tomato slices and avocado on toast.

What if my meal isn't served on a plate?

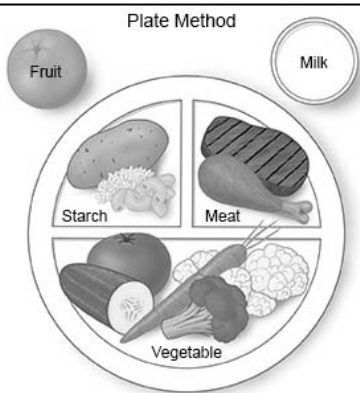
Some meals come in a bowl or cup which can complicate this way of eating. Think about your meal as percentages: 50% non-starchy vegetables, 25% starchy foods and 25% protein. An example of this could be chicken noodle soup. Use proportions of non-starchy vegetables, noodles and chicken similar to what you would find on a plate. Or, have a cup of soup rather than a bowl and a side salad.

How does this work with mixed dishes such as tacos and pizza?

Some meals combine multiple ingredients into one item. For example, tacos are mostly beef or chicken and tortillas. Simply fill half your plate with that combo food, and fill the other half with vegetables such as fajita peppers, and onions.

Where does dessert fit?

To include sweets, cut back on other carbohydrate foods at that meal. For example, if you plan to have cake, skip the fruit, and/or starchy food. This allows you to keep the carbohydrates about the same.



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Breakfast Ideas:

- Breakfast tacos: Fill 2 corn tortillas with 2 scrambled eggs, ¼ cup black beans, ¼ cup salsa, shredded cabbage, and cilantro
- Egg sandwich: 1 whole grain English muffin, 1 scrambled egg, 1 ounce cheddar cheese, ¼ avocado, 2 tomato slices, and alfalfa sprouts.
- Savory Oats: ½ c oats cooked in low-sodium chicken broth with sautéed mushrooms and asparagus. Top with parmesan cheese
- Green Smoothie: 1 cup spinach, 1/2 cup mixed berries, 1 scoop whey protein, 1 cup milk
- 2 poached eggs over ½ cup grits with sautéed spinach and asparagus
- Zucchini Oatless “oatmeal”: Cook 3 egg white, ½ cup almond milk, 1 T. ground flaxseed on medium-low heat. Add ½ cup grated zucchini, ½ cup applesauce and cinnamon. Cook on low for 5-10 minutes. Top with nuts and berries.
- 1 slice whole wheat bread toasted with ¼ avocado and shredded beets on top.

Lunch Ideas:

- Vegetable Quesadilla: 1-6” whole wheat tortilla, 1 ounce pepper jack cheese, 1 cup roasted vegetables (peppers, onions, mushrooms)
- Veggie Spring Rolls: 2 rice paper rounds rolled around, ½ cup rice noodles, 2 cups grated or julienned vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, peppers, cabbage), fresh mint and basil, 2-ounces tofu. Peanut dipping sauce: 1 T. peanut butter, 1 teaspoon soy sauce, red pepper flakes
- Greek Quinoa salad: ½ cup cooked quinoa, ½ cup chickpeas, 1 ounce feta cheese, 1 T. chopped Kalamata olives, 1 cup chopped vegetables (red onion, cucumber, bell peppers, broccoli)

- Hummus Pita: 1 small whole wheat pita. 2 T. hummus, 1 ounce Swiss cheese, alfalfa sprouts, sliced cucumbers, red onion, bell peppers.
- Avocado Egg Salad Sandwich: Mix together 2 hardboiled egg chopped, ¼ avocado mashed, 1 teas. light mayo. Serve open faced on whole wheat toast with tomato slices and shredded lettuce
- Italian tuna salad: 1 cup arugula, ½ cup Cannellini beans, ¼ cup canned tuna, 1 T capers, grape tomatoes

Dinner Ideas:

- Vegetable Curry: Cook onions, carrots, broccoli, snow peas, diced potatoes with garlic and ginger for 10 minutes. Add 1 T curry powder and 1 can coconut milk. Cook another 10-15 minutes. Pour over brown rice and top with 3 ounces roasted chicken (optional).
- Fish tacos: pan sear 3 ounces white fish (tilapia, cod, etc) seasoned with cumin, paprika. Serve with 2 corn tortillas, ½ cup black beans, 1 ounce shredded cheese, diced tomatoes, and shredded cabbage.
- 1 grilled chicken thigh with 1 T BBQ sauce, 1 corn on the cobb, 1 cup steamed green beans.
- Spaghetti Squash Boats: 1 spaghetti squash cut in half lengthwise. Roast for 30 minutes, cool, and scoop out the insides with a fork. Mix with ½ cup marinara, and 2 ounces cooked Italian Turkey sausage, 1 ounce part skim mozzarella. Bake in oven until cheese melts. Serve with thin slice whole wheat French bread.
- 1 veggie burger patty topped with mustard, tomato and onion slices on a sandwich thin bun. ½ cup baked sweet potato fries and side salad.