



The Best Plant-Based Foods For Omega-3



Omega-3 fatty acids are vital to our health. Keeping the heart healthy, the nervous system in check, and our cholesterol levels down, Omega-3s are a friend to the body. One of the best sources known for Omega-3 is fish. If you are vegetarian and vegan, however, this presents a problem. As someone who has primarily a vegetarian diet, I myself have had to be conscious of knowing where my Omegas are coming from.

In the case of Omega-3s, there are three types that are important to health: *docosahexaenoic acid* (DHA), *eicosapentaenoic acid* (EPA), and *alpha-linolenic acid* (ALA). DHA and EPA are mostly found in fish and seaweed, whereas ALA is a plant based Omega-3.

The good news is, however, our bodies can produce DHA and EPA from consuming ALA Omega-3. Of course, there is a catch. In order to increase the Omega-3s, you must decrease the Omega-6s. The reason is Omega-6 fatty acids may prevent the body from converting ALA into Omega-3s. If you are looking to increase your levels of Omega-3s, here are some rich food sources that can help.

1. Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are a power food! The tiny seeds are an incredible energy booster and have an unbelievable amount of fiber. With a single ounce, you can consume over 400mg of Omega-3.

2. Flaxseed

Flaxseeds -- as well as flaxseed oil -- are amazing for reaching your Omega-3 needs. The flaxseed is the most concentrated source of ALA. It is important, however, **to grind them before eating** -- otherwise your body won't break them down and benefit from the nutrients.

3. Greens

Leafy greens such as spinach and kale are an excellent source of Omega-3. Odds are if you're vegetarian or vegan you have no problem getting your important Omegas in from eating a giant, leafy salad.

4. Certain Oils

Hemp oil, olive oil, and flaxseed oil all contain Omega-3. When cooking with any of these, make sure the oil is fresh so the high temperature won't deplete the nutritional benefits.

5. Seaweed

Consuming seaweed has a multitude of health benefits just waiting to be unleashed. Among them is our friend the Omega-3. If you're vegan, it's important to add seaweed to your diet as it's the only vegan friendly source of EPA and DHA.

6. Walnuts

Unless you're allergic, it's easy to get Omega-3s from eating a handful of walnuts. As well as being a source of energy, walnuts can give you the Omega-3 boost you are in need of.

7. Winter Squash

The beauty of winter squash is that they keep well, allowing you to have a source of nutrients throughout a long, cold winter. There is over 300mg of Omega-3 per cup of cooked squash, so add some to the rotation.

Like all diets, it's important to know what you're eating and the nutrition you're consuming. Here's to better health!

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