

Alternatives to Chicken in the Healthy Diet

Many people use chicken as an inexpensive source of protein in the diet. However, the many health hazards associated with chicken and other meat, along with declining availability of imported chicken flesh, may lead consumers to look for other sources of protein in the diet.

The good news is that many other foods are good sources of protein. Vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds all offer good, healthy protein and can be used in traditional or innovative meals.

A healthy diet is one in which at least 13 percent of the calories are from protein. The following guide tells the percentage of protein in many common foods. All of the foods listed are good sources of protein and can be included as part of a balanced and enjoyable diet. Meat substitutes made from soya or grains can also be used to augment the diet, but are not necessary as long as most of the calories consumed are from foods with percentages of protein at or above 13 percent.

<u>Food item</u>	<u>% of calories from protein</u>	<u>Food item</u>	<u>% of calories from protein</u>
Vegetables		Legumes	
Spinach	49	Soya	33
Watercress	46	Lentils	29
Kale	45	Lima Beans	27
Broccoli	45	Pinto Beans	26
Cauliflower	40	Peas	26
Mushroom	39	Chickpeas	23
Lettuce	28	Peanuts	18
Radish	24	Grains	
Cucumber	24	Wheat	17
Squash	23	Oatmeal	15
Cabbage	22	Rye	14
Onion	17	Nuts and Seeds	
Corn	15	Sunflower Seeds	17
Beets	15	Sesame Seeds	13
Pumpkin	15	Black Walnuts	13
Turnips	13		

Please note: This is a list of foods that are good sources of protein. Vegetables, grains and legumes not listed here, along with fruits, offer other important nutrients and should also be included as part of a balanced diet.

Many people use chicken to add flavor to meals. Here are some suggestions for other ways to make food taste good:

- Use spices such as rosemary, sage, and paprika to add savor to boiled, roasted, or fried vegetables.
- Add a little olive oil or sesame oil to soups to replace chicken fat.
- Saute garlic and onions in the pot before adding the ingredients for soup or stew.

• Use a meat substitute made from vegetables, grains or soya in place of the meat in any recipe which calls for chicken.

• Save and reuse the water in which vegetables such as spinach, kale or beets have been cooked and use this in place of chicken broth. This adds vitamins as well as flavor.

• Include food items such as roasted garlic, olives, pickled beets, roasted peppers or soya sauce in meals order to provide a wide variety of satisfying savory flavors.