

14 Great Sources of Clean Protein



Clean protein is harder to come by than you might think. Pesticides, heavy metals, and antibiotics are abundant in almost all factory-produced nonorganic meat, poultry, fish, dairy, and eggs. Fast food joints pump almost all of their items with food flavorings and chemicals to increase shelf life. To avoid all the negative health effects, go for the following foods whenever possible. Make friends with farmers at the closest farmers' market, read food labels at the stores, and ask questions at the restaurants. You deserve to know where your food is coming from.

Almonds

Almonds are strongly anti-inflammatory, and are a good source for healthy fats, fiber, and protein. To make almonds easier to digest, soak them overnight and peel the skins. Nuts aren't a complete protein since they don't have a full range of amino acids, but they serve as a great addition to a healthy diet.

Spirulina

Spirulina is one of the great superfoods. It's approximately 65 to 71 percent complete protein in its natural state, higher than virtually any other unprocessed food. And unlike most other forms of protein, the protein in spirulina is 85-95% digestible. Since spirulina has no cellulose in its cell walls, it's extremely easy for the body to break it down. While spirulina is great, make sure it's collected from a clean body of water, not public lakes that allow boats. It also can't serve as a main source of protein since it would be hard to take it sufficient quantities to make up for body's demand for protein.

Wild Fish

While most nutritionists would say that fish is healthy, not all fish is equal. The origin matters a lot. Farmed fish is the same as a caged chicken. They aren't fed a natural diet, are often sick, don't have as many desirable omega-3s, and might be full of antibiotics and dioxin. Wild is the way to go if you consume fish on a regular basis.

Quinoa

Quinoa is a "complete protein" pseudo-grain. It tastes great and is easy to cook, even for kitchen newbies. Buckwheat is another grain (seed) that is a complete protein and can be substituted for quinoa.

Cage-free eggs

Eggs are a rich source of thiamine, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, folic acids, vitamin B12, biotin, vitamin D, vitamin E, and phosphorus. Eggs can be a great easy-to-digest food if chickens had a healthy diet, were cage free, and got to run around outside. Whole eggs are also much more nutrient dense than egg whites, since egg yolks contain most of the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and omega-3 fatty acids. Buy whole organic eggs, not mechanically separated, chemically altered egg whites.

Hemp Seeds

Sixty-five percent of the total protein content of hemp seed comes from the globular protein edestin, which is easily digested, absorbed, and utilized by the human body. It's also hypoallergenic. Hemp contains about 30% protein.

Chia Seeds

This miracle food offers complete protein that's mildly anti-inflammatory, easy to digest, and easy to cook with. Chia seeds are a good source of calcium and phosphorus, and a very good source of dietary fiber and manganese. Chia seed pudding can be a great easy-to-make breakfast option or a healthy fiber- and protein-rich snack.

Whey Powder

Whey protein is the second most abundant protein derived from milk (casein is the most abundant milk protein). It's found mainly in meal-replacement powders, protein powders, and ready-to-consume drinks. Whey contains all of the essential amino acids and is particularly high in the branched-chain amino acids (leucine, isoleucine, and valine) and glutamine (an immune-boosting amino acid). Make sure it's grass-fed, organic, and hormone free.

Lentils

While they're not a complete protein, lentils are a great source of amino acids, healthy carbs, and filling fiber. When combined with grains, they form a complete protein. They will keep hunger at bay and are easier to digest than larger beans.

Organic Chicken

Chicken contains all of the essential amino acids, but make sure to choose chickens that were raised in humane conditions, fed a variable nutrient-dense diet, and got to see sunshine, not just a sad cage. It makes a difference in taste and its effects on the body.

Cottage Cheese and Greek Yogurt

If you aren't sensitive to dairy, plain cottage cheese and Greek yogurt can be a good addition to a balanced diet. Both are pretty low in sugar, have a good amount of protein, and healthy fats. Choose organic to avoid hormones, chemicals, and hidden antibiotics. If you have any symptoms of dairy intolerance, it's best to do an elimination diet or get blood work done at a qualified center.

Tempeh

Tempeh is made out of fermented soy and can be a great source of clean protein for vegans if they don't have soy sensitivity. Make sure it is organic and not genetically modified. It's been shown that soy protein is comparable in digestibility to other high-quality protein sources such as meat, milk, fish, and egg. Avoid processed "fake" soy meats, and don't rely on soy alone for your protein.

Grass-fed Beef

Beef is loaded with zinc, iron and all the amino acids as well. If you consume meat, make it grass fed, not grain fed. It's cleaner, more flavorful, safer, and with more nutrients.