

UPGRADED HEALTH

# The High-Protein Grocery Store Cheat Sheets

*What to buy, how to compare it, and what to make*

Take the guesswork out of your next grocery trip with practical food charts, flexible swaps and meals you can assemble without cooking.

## Inside your guide

Protein reference charts

Convenience-food buying tips

Budget comparisons and ingredient swaps

10 no-cook meals for one

A printable shopping checklist

A companion to The 30-Day High-Protein Meal Plan for Women Over 40.

By Upgraded Health

## Start here: shop for the week you have

### Use this beside your meal plan

Your 30-day program lists the ingredients for its scheduled recipes. This guide helps you compare packages, replace an unavailable ingredient and assemble a meal when your plans change. If you choose a meal here, remove the original meal's ingredients from your shopping list and add the new amounts.

### Before you leave home

Pick the meals you actually expect to make. Check the refrigerator, freezer and pantry. Note which ingredients must be ready-cooked and which can be raw. Take a photo of any label you want to buy again.

### At the store

Compare the same amount of food, then check protein, price and the other nutrients that matter to you. Buy a package you can use or store safely. A large tub is only a bargain when you finish it.

### Find what you need

| Pages | Use them for                                          |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 3–4   | Protein portions at a glance                          |
| 5–6   | Dairy, ready-cooked foods, pantry and freezer choices |
| 7     | Reading labels and adjusting serving sizes            |
| 8–9   | Comparing value and making swaps                      |
| 10–12 | Ten no-cook meals, each serving one                   |
| 13    | Your reusable shopping checklist                      |
| 14    | Sources, estimates and storage notes                  |

Protein amounts are rounded planning estimates, not personal targets or verified nutrient analyses. Product labels take precedence. No-cook combinations have not been kitchen-tested. This is a general food-shopping guide, not a prescribed diet.

## Protein chart: dairy, eggs, fish & poultry

Amounts below describe the stated food portion, not an entire meal. Weights are edible portions. Cooked weights do not equal raw weights. These rounded inputs match the companion program; actual brands vary.

| Food                                  | Portion           | Approx. protein |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Plain Greek yogurt                    | 200 g (7 oz)      | 20 g            |
| Plain cottage cheese                  | 150 g (5.3 oz)    | 18 g            |
| Milk                                  | 240 ml (1 cup)    | 8 g             |
| Large eggs, cooked                    | 2 eggs            | 12 g            |
| Liquid egg whites, cook before eating | 100 g (3.5 oz)    | 11 g            |
| Ready-to-eat cooked chicken breast    | 100 g (3.5 oz)    | 26 g            |
| Light tuna in water, drained          | One 5 oz can*     | 20 g            |
| Plain salmon pouch                    | One 2.5 oz pouch* | 13 g            |
| Ready-to-eat cooked shrimp            | 100 g (3.5 oz)    | 20 g            |
| Part-skim mozzarella                  | 30 g (1.1 oz)     | 7 g             |
| Part-skim ricotta                     | 125 g (4.4 oz)    | 14 g            |

### Read the package, especially for small containers

A yogurt cup may contain 150 g, 170 g or another amount. A can or pouch may contain one or several labeled servings. Multiply protein per serving by the number of servings you eat.

\*Tuna and salmon entries assume labels showing 20 g per can and 13 g per pouch. Container ounces describe package size; drain as directed. Other package sizes or formulas can differ. Greek yogurt here uses a rounded 10 g per 100 g input; some labels are higher. See page 14.

## Protein chart: beans, soy, grains & nuts

| Food                            | Portion / state                        | Approx. protein |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Extra-firm tofu*                | 150 g (5.3 oz), drained                | 18 g            |
| Tempeh                          | 100 g (3.5 oz), before cooking         | 19 g            |
| Shelled edamame                 | 100 g (3.5 oz), frozen weight;<br>cook | 11 g            |
| Lentils                         | 150 g (5.3 oz), cooked / drained       | 12 g            |
| Chickpeas, white or black beans | 150 g (5.3 oz), canned / drained       | 10 g            |
| Hummus                          | 60 g (2.1 oz)                          | 4 g             |
| Unsweetened soy milk            | 240 ml (1 cup)                         | 8 g             |
| Peanut butter                   | 30 g (1.1 oz), about 2 tbsp            | 8 g             |
| Almonds                         | 30 g (1.1 oz)                          | 6 g             |
| Pumpkin seeds                   | 30 g (1.1 oz)                          | 9 g             |
| Rolled oats                     | 40 g (1.4 oz), dry                     | 5 g             |
| Whole-grain bread               | 60 g (2.1 oz)                          | 5 g             |
| Quinoa                          | 150 g (5.3 oz), cooked                 | 7 g             |

### Use the food's full role

Beans, grains, nuts and seeds contribute more than protein. Keep them in meals for variety, texture and other nutrients. A spoonful of hummus or peanut butter is a useful addition, but it does not replace a full portion of chicken or tofu gram for gram.

\*Choose tofu labeled at least 12 g protein per 100 g to match this estimate. Softer tofu and other brands may contain less. Frozen edamame and tempeh usually require cooking: follow the label, even when you plan to serve them cold.

## Refrigerated aisle: compare before buying

### Greek yogurt and cottage cheese

Compare equal weights, not just “one cup” versus “one tub.” Check protein and added sugars. Plain versions let you add your own fruit or flavorings. Pick a fat level and portion that suit the meal and your needs.

### Milk and dairy-free alternatives

Compare protein per cup. Soy milk can be closer to dairy milk in protein than many almond or oat drinks, but formulas differ. Check calcium and vitamin D fortification if those matter to your choice. A dairy-free label does not mean equal protein.

### Ready-cooked chicken and peeled eggs

Look for fully cooked or ready-to-eat instructions. Compare protein, sodium, package weight and the amount you will actually eat. Bone-in rotisserie chicken includes weight you will not use; a boneless package is easier to portion.

### Prepared salads and lunch kits

Check whether the nutrition panel includes dressing and toppings. Count servings per container. Identify the main protein ingredient; a salad name alone does not tell you how much is inside.

### What belongs in your cart?

Choose a few items that fit the meals you selected, rather than buying one of everything. Write the opening date on larger packages and follow label storage instructions.

## Pantry & freezer: useful backup foods

### Canned fish

Compare protein per whole drained can or pouch. Check sodium and choose flavors you will use. Rotate fish with beans, tofu, poultry and other proteins rather than making every backup meal tuna.

### Beans and lentils

Canned beans and ready-to-eat lentil pouches can be used without cooking when the label permits. Drain and rinse canned beans. Buy enough for the drained amount in the recipe; the total can weight includes liquid.

### Frozen proteins

Keep raw and fully cooked options distinct. Raw frozen chicken or fish is a dinner ingredient, not an immediate meal. Frozen vegetables and edamame may require cooking even after thawing. Read preparation directions before calling anything no-cook.

### Frozen meals

Read protein and serving count for the amount you will eat. Compare sodium, saturated fat, fiber and the overall portion too. Add vegetables, fruit or another suitable side when the meal needs more food; follow all heating directions.

### Bread, crackers and extras

Compare serving weights and choose a grain option you enjoy. Hummus, nuts and seeds help finish a meal. Protein bars and shakes are optional convenience choices; compare the portion, ingredients and price with foods you already like.

# The 60-second label check

## 1. Start with the serving size

The label's serving size describes an amount commonly eaten; it is not a recommendation for how much you personally should eat. Check the number of servings in the package. [1]

## 2. Match the amount you will eat

Protein eaten = protein per labeled serving  $\times$  servings eaten. If a 150 g serving has 15 g protein, a 200 g portion provides about 20 g:  $15 \times 200 \div 150$ .

## 3. Compare equal portions

To compare yogurt brands, calculate protein per 100 g: protein per serving  $\div$  serving weight in grams  $\times$  100. Then decide how much you want to eat. Higher protein alone does not determine the best choice.

## 4. Look beyond protein

Check added sugars, sodium, saturated fat and fiber. As an FDA label-reading guide, 5% Daily Value or less is low and 20% or more is high. These are general label benchmarks, not individual goals. [1]

## 5. Read ingredients and directions

Check allergens and required preparation. Review the specific product even if another flavor or package from the same brand worked for you.

## A front label is a starting point

Turn the package over. "Plant-based," "keto" or "protein" on the front does not tell you the protein in your portion, the full ingredient list or whether the product fits your needs.

## Budget sheet: compare what you will use

Prices below are hypothetical examples, not current store prices. Use the formula with your own labels and shelf prices.

| Example               | Tub A  | Tub B  |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Price                 | \$4.00 | \$5.00 |
| Servings per tub      | 4      | 5      |
| Protein per serving   | 15 g   | 20 g   |
| Total protein per tub | 60 g   | 100 g  |
| Cost per 20 g protein | \$1.33 | \$1.00 |

### The calculation

Cost per 20 g protein = package price ÷ total protein in package × 20. For Tub B: \$5 ÷ 100 × 20 = \$1.00. The 20 g amount is just a comparison unit, not a meal target.

### The cheaper calculation is not always the better purchase

Consider taste, other nutrients, allergens and waste. If you throw away half of Tub B, its cost for the protein you actually eat doubles. Compare edible or drained portions when bones, skin or packing liquid are involved.

### Three useful checks

Compare a store brand with the brand you usually buy. Compare individual cups with a tub you can finish. Compare dry beans with canned beans only after accounting for cooking time and cooked yield.

### Try it with two products

| Your comparison                | Product A | Product B |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Package price                  | _____     | _____     |
| Servings × protein per serving | _____     | _____     |
| Cost per 20 g protein          | _____     | _____     |
| Will I finish or freeze it?    | _____     | _____     |

## Flexible swaps when plans change

These swaps are based on the rounded chart inputs. They are close in protein, not equal in calories, texture or other nutrients. Prices vary; check which option costs less in your store.

| Original portion     | Possible replacement        | Approx. protein |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 100 g cooked chicken | 200 g cottage cheese        | 26 g → 24 g     |
| One tuna can (20 g)  | 170 g extra-firm tofu*      | 20 g → 20 g     |
| 200 g Greek yogurt   | 170 g cottage cheese        | 20 g → 20 g     |
| 150 g cooked lentils | 185 g drained canned beans  | 12 g → 12 g     |
| 150 g tofu*          | 150 g cottage cheese        | 18 g → 18 g     |
| 240 ml dairy milk    | 240 ml unsweetened soy milk | 8 g → 8 g       |

### Change the meal, not just the ingredient

Cottage cheese works beside bread or in a bowl; it will not behave like chicken in a stir-fry. Mash tofu with lemon and herbs for a sandwich only if its label permits ready-to-eat use. Otherwise cook it and cool safely before using.

### Update the shopping list

Cross off the old amount and add the replacement amount for every serving you changed. The meals on pages 10–12 serve one; double all amounts for two adults. Recalculate from your labels when the protein amount matters to you.

\*Tofu must have at least 12 g protein per 100 g for these comparisons. A swap is not automatically allergen-free. Check all ingredients and preparation directions.

## No-cook meals: wraps, bowls & plates

Each combination serves ONE. Allow about 5–10 minutes. Use washed produce and fully cooked, ready-to-eat ingredients; follow package directions. Protein totals are rounded estimates.

### 01 Chicken & crunchy slaw wrap | ~34 g protein

100 g ready-to-eat cooked chicken; 1 whole-wheat tortilla (60 g); 40 g hummus; 80 g washed ready-to-eat slaw mix.

Spread hummus on the tortilla. Add chopped chicken and slaw, then roll tightly.

### 02 Salmon & white bean salad | ~34 g protein

2 plain salmon pouches (2.5 oz each, 13 g protein each); 100 g canned white beans, drained; 100 g cucumber; 100 g cherry tomatoes; 15 ml lemon juice; 5 ml olive oil.

Flake salmon into a bowl. Add beans and chopped vegetables; toss with lemon and oil.

### 03 Peach & cottage cheese breakfast plate | ~36 g protein

250 g cottage cheese; 150 g peach, pitted; 30 g whole-grain crackers; 15 g almonds.

Slice the peach. Serve beside cottage cheese, crackers and almonds.

### 04 Chickpea & feta pita | ~25 g protein

150 g canned chickpeas, drained; 60 g feta; 1 whole-wheat pita (60 g); 100 g cucumber; 10 ml lemon juice.

Mash chickpeas with lemon. Fill the pita with chickpeas, crumbled feta and diced cucumber.

Keep perishables chilled at 40°F or below. Pack an insulated lunch bag with at least two cold sources. These are alternatives, not a daily menu. [2]

## No-cook meals: quick lunches & breakfast

Each combination serves ONE. Allow about 5–10 minutes. Use washed produce and fully cooked, ready-to-eat ingredients; follow package directions. Protein totals are rounded estimates.

### 05 Chicken & avocado salad plate | ~35 g protein

100 g ready-to-eat cooked chicken; 60 g whole-grain bread; 50 g avocado; 100 g washed romaine; 100 g tomatoes; 10 ml lemon juice.

Slice chicken and vegetables. Toss romaine with lemon; serve with chicken, avocado and bread.

### 06 Berry-almond yogurt bowl | ~35 g protein

250 g plain Greek yogurt; 100 g berries; 25 g almonds; 30 g rolled oats labeled suitable for uncooked use.

Stir oats into yogurt and top with berries and almonds. Eat immediately for a chewy texture.

### 07 Tuna & bean cracker plate | ~35 g protein

1 light tuna can (5 oz, 20 g protein), drained; 100 g canned white beans, drained; 50 g Greek yogurt; 30 g whole-grain crackers; 100 g cucumber; 10 ml lemon juice.

Mash beans with yogurt and lemon. Fold in tuna and serve with crackers and cucumber.

Keep perishables chilled at 40°F or below. Pack an insulated lunch bag with at least two cold sources. These are alternatives, not a daily menu. [2]

## No-cook meals: three more easy options

Each combination serves ONE. Allow about 5–10 minutes. Use washed produce and fully cooked, ready-to-eat ingredients; follow package directions. Protein totals are rounded estimates.

### 08 Lentil & cottage cheese bowl | ~32 g protein

150 g ready-to-eat cooked lentils, drained; 150 g cottage cheese; 100 g tomatoes; 100 g cucumber; 5 ml olive oil; 10 ml lemon juice.

Combine lentils and diced vegetables with lemon and oil. Spoon cottage cheese alongside.

### 09 Egg, hummus & pita lunch | ~37 g protein

2 purchased fully cooked peeled eggs; 60 g hummus; 1 whole-wheat pita (60 g); 100 g carrots; 150 g plain Greek yogurt.

Halve eggs and cut carrots. Pack with hummus and pita; serve yogurt on the side.

### 10 Peanut-banana yogurt bowl | ~37 g protein

250 g Greek yogurt; 30 g peanut butter; 120 g peeled banana; 40 g whole-grain bread.

Stir peanut butter into yogurt and top with sliced banana. Serve bread alongside.

Keep perishables chilled at 40°F or below. Pack an insulated lunch bag with at least two cold sources. These are alternatives, not a daily menu. [2]

# Your grocery trip checklist

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_ Shopping for: \_\_\_\_\_ people

## Before shopping

- Review the meals I will actually make.
- Check the fridge, freezer and pantry.
- Cross off replaced meals; add the new ingredients.
- Check which items must be ready-to-eat.

| Aisle                          | Items and amounts needed |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dairy / alternatives           | _____<br>_____           |
| Fish / poultry / eggs / tofu   | _____<br>_____           |
| Beans / lentils / canned goods | _____<br>_____           |
| Produce                        | _____<br>_____           |
| Bread / grains / nuts / extras | _____<br>_____           |
| Frozen foods                   | _____<br>_____           |

## Before checkout

- Compare serving sizes and protein for my portions.
- Check allergens, preparation and storage directions.
- Choose package sizes I can finish or freeze.

First foods to use: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sources & practical notes

### How to use the numbers

Food charts use rounded planning inputs consistent with the companion program. Meal totals include all listed ingredients and are rounded to whole grams. They are not a laboratory analysis or an individualized protein prescription. Compare your exact labels when making substitutions. No brand sponsorship is implied.

### Protein references

USDA FoodData Central: reference database for food composition  
<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/>

FAGE Total 0%: example label, 18 g protein per 170 g  
<https://usa.fage/products/yogurt/fage-total-0>

StarKist Chunk Light Tuna in Water: example 5 oz can, 20 g protein  
<https://starkist.com/product/chunk-light-tuna-in-water-can/>

The charts are general estimates, not a claim that every food was entered into a nutrient-analysis database. The yogurt example illustrates why your label may differ from the rounded chart.

### Label and storage references

[1] FDA: How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>

[2] USDA FSIS: Keeping Bag Lunches Safe  
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/keeping-bag-lunches-safe>

Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F. Follow the shortest applicable package storage instruction. No-cook does not mean shelf-stable: use a refrigerator or cold sources until eating. [2]

Prepared for Upgraded Health • September 2026. This guide provides general shopping and cooking education. If you have a prescribed diet, use your clinician's or dietitian's guidance when choosing foods.