

Meat-free Meals



Kia ora koutou,

Many adults in New Zealand have grown up eating 'meat and three veges' for dinner every night. While this isn't a problem for some, there are numerous benefits to incorporating 1-2 meat-free meals into your week. There are many protein-packed, delicious alternatives to meat such as lentils, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, tofu, tahini, eggs, and milk which can be purchased in our supermarkets on the West Coast.

Canned lentils, beans and chickpeas require no soaking or cooking prior to using, so they're a really quick, convenient, nutritious way to cook or bulk out a meal containing meat.

- **Cost** – lentils, beans and peas are cost-effective and are cheapest if they are bought dried. Tinned lentils cost between \$1.40 – \$3.00 per can. Eggs are also a great tummy filler! Any vegetables can be used frozen, canned, or fresh.
- **Nutritious** – Lentils, beans, peas, nuts and seeds are high in dietary fibre. Dietary fibre is good for digestive health, bowel movement, and regulating blood cholesterol levels.
- **Delicious** – It's an opportunity to try different flavours by adding different herbs and spices to meals and experimenting with vegetables.

Vegetarian Bolognese (serves 4-6)

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 - 1 large onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cups finely chopped vegetables (e.g., carrot, leek, celery, parsnip, or use broccoli, frozen mixed vegetables)
 - 2 teaspoons crushed garlic
 - 2 teaspoons dried mixed herbs
 - 1 can chopped tomatoes
 - ½ cup water
 - 2 cans brown lentils, drained and rinsed
 - 500g pasta, cooked
1. Heat oil in a pan and gently cook the onion until well browned, stirring regularly.
 2. Add the vegetables to the pan and continue cooking gently for 5 minutes, still stirring regularly.
 3. Add the garlic and mixed herbs and season with salt and pepper. Stir well and add the tomatoes, water and lentils.
 4. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding a little more water if it starts to stick. Serve with pasta, rice, wraps or baked potatoes.