



PROTEIN

POWER-UP

Guide

Introduction

Hi there! It's Lia. If you're like me, you've got the elements of a **Nourished Plate** down, thanks to Cook the Seasons. But as I've moved into my 50s, I've noticed I need to be more intentional about getting **enough protein throughout the day**. If that's something you're looking to do too, I've got you covered!

This simple guide will help you **power up your protein intake** while still keeping **seasonal veggies at the center of your plate**.

Because here's the thing: Many high-protein guides focus only on macronutrients while ignoring the powerhouse of **micronutrients** that come from whole, plant-based foods. But with Cook the Seasons, we're already starting from the **best foundation**—and now we're just adding a little boost!

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THE SCIENCE OF PROTEIN: WHY WE NEED IT

Before we jump into the "how," let's talk about the "why." Protein isn't just for bodybuilders and athletes—it's essential for everyone, and particularly important for women as we age.

Protein serves as the building blocks for nearly everything in your body: your muscles, bones, skin, hair, and even the enzymes that digest your food. It helps repair tissue, supports immune function, maintains fluid balance, and transports nutrients throughout your body.

When we don't get enough, it can bring on fatigue, muscle weakness, slower recovery from exercise or injury, and even difficulty maintaining a healthy weight (did you know muscle is where *mitochondria* are housed ... which are the little power stations that control our metabolism?).

But here's what many mainstream "protein guides" miss: protein doesn't exist in isolation. Your body needs a complex symphony of macronutrients (protein, fat, and carbs) *and* micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytochemicals) to function optimally. And guess where those micronutrients come from? Primarily plants! This is why Cook the Seasons has always emphasized starting with vegetables and building from there.

By combining our vegetable-forward approach with strategic protein additions, we're giving our body the complete nutrition package it needs to thrive ... at any age.

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HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED?

The amount of protein your body needs varies based on several factors, including age, activity level, and overall health. Here are evidence-based recommendations specifically for women:

AGE GROUP	DAILY PROTEIN RECOMMENDATION	NOTES
25-40	0.36-0.45g per lb body weight	Minimum for basic health maintenance
41-65	0.45-0.67g per lb body weight	Increased needs to preserve muscle mass
65+	0.68-0.82g per lb body weight	Higher needs to combat age-related muscle loss

For active women (regardless of age):

- Moderate exercise (3-5 days/week): Add 0.05-0.09g per lb
- High-intensity or strength training: Add 0.09-0.18g per lb

To put this in perspective, a 150lb woman who is 45 years old and moderately active would need approximately 68-101g of protein daily.

Remember, these are guidelines, not rigid rules. Listen to your body and adjust as needed.

EASY WAYS TO ADD PROTEIN TO ANY MEAL



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POWER-UP YOUR PLATE: EASY PROTEIN ADDITIONS

The beauty of the Cook the Seasons approach is that it provides the perfect foundation to build upon. Here are simple, whole-food protein boosters you can add to almost any meal or snack. I've included the protein content per serving so you can see just how quickly these additions can power up your plate.



EDAMAME

17g protein per cup

Add to grain bowls, salads, or enjoy as a snack.



HEMP SEEDS

10g protein per 3 tbsp

Sprinkle on oatmeal, in yogurt, or blend into smoothies.



CHIA SEEDS

5g protein per 2 tbsp

Stir into yogurt, pudding, or overnight oats.



NUTRITIONAL YEAST

8g protein per 2 tbsp

Sprinkle on popcorn, pasta, or soups.



LENTILS

9g protein per 1/2 cup cooked

Add to soups, stews, and salads.



CHICKPEAS

7g protein per 1/2 cup cooked

Blend into hummus or toss into bowls and salads.



BLACK BEANS

7g protein per 1/2 cup cooked

Use in tacos, burritos, salad, or chili.



WHITE BEANS

8g protein per 1/2 cup cooked

Mash into dips or add to soups or wraps.

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QUINOA

4g protein per 1/2 cup cooked

Use as a base for bowls or mix into salads.



TOFU

9g protein per 3.5 oz

Stir-fry, scramble, or mix into grain bowls.



TEMPEH

15g protein per 3 oz

Crumble into sautéés or slice for sandwiches.



COTTAGE CHEESE

14g protein per 1/2 cup

Eat on its own or mix with fruit and seeds.



TUNA

20g protein per 3 oz

Flake into salads or on whole grain avocado toast.



SARDINES

23g protein per 3 oz

Enjoy on crackers, layer on avocado toast, or mash into spreads.



GREEK YOGURT

16g protein per 3/4 cup

Go sweet or savory as a dip or snack.



PUMPKIN SEEDS

9g protein per 1/4 cup

Add crunch to salads, soups, or roasted vegetables.



ALMONDS

6g protein per 1/4 cup

Toast and add to yogurt, salads, or as a snack.



SUNFLOWER SEEDS

7g protein per 1/4 cup

Toast and add to salads or snack mixes.



PEANUTS

9g protein per 1/4 cup

As a snack or topping for Asian-inspired dishes.



PEAS

8g protein per cup

Add to any dish or salad.

Sprinkle, stir, swap, or top with these ingredients to **easily power up your plate!**

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CORE RECIPES FROM COOK THE SEASONS

A great way to **effortlessly add protein** to your meals is by adding one or two simple **Core Recipes** to your Meal Mapper to use as protein power-up additions to your Reinventions -- or in mix-and-match lunch bowls -- throughout the week.

CHICKEN & POULTRY

HOW TO USE

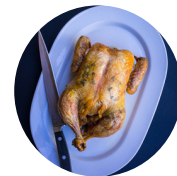
Shred into salads, tuck into wraps, or mix into grain bowls.



Dry-Brined
Chicken
Breast



Nourishing
Shake 'n' Bake
Chicken



Simplest
Roast
Chicken



Roasted
Chicken Thighs
with Citrus



Revelationary
Duck Confit

SHRIMP

HOW TO USE

Toss into stir-fries, mix into grain bowls, or fold into warm pasta dishes.



Portuguese
Shrimp



Hot & Spicy
Shrimp

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FISH

HOW TO USE

Flake into salads, tuck into tacos, or mix into grain bowls.



Dry-Brined
Miso Salmon



Slow-Roasted
Salmon



Wild Salmon with
Smoked Paprika



Blackened
Catfish

PORK

HOW TO USE

Slice into grain bowls or salads, mix into stir-fries, or add to tacos or sandwiches.



Spice-
Roasted Pork
Loin



Chipotle-Citrus
Roast Pork
Tenderloin



Super Succulent
Five-Spice Pork
Shoulder



Lia's Carnitas

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MEATBALLS

HOW TO USE

Add to soups or pasta, serve over grains, or tuck into sandwiches.



Asian
Chicken
Meatballs



Meatless
Meatballs



Nourishing
Italian
Meatballs

BEEF

HOW TO USE

Slice over salads, mix into grain bowls, or toss into stir-fries.



Flank Steak
with Red
Wine Sauce



Pan-Roasted
Ribeye

WHOLE GRAINS

HOW TO USE

Mix into salads and stir-fries.



Beautifully
Basic
Buckwheat



Quick & Easy
Kasha



Easy Farro
Pilaf



Spiced Quinoa



15-Minute
Farrotto



Sautéed
Wheat Berries

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BEANS & LEGUMES

HOW TO USE

Stir into soups, mash into dips, or mix into grain bowls or salads.



Chickpeas
with Blistered
Scallions



All-Purpose
French Lentils



Creamy
Slow-Cooked
White Beans



Smoky Baked
Lima Beans



All-Purpose White
Bean Spread



Lia's Black
Beans



Santa
Maria-Style
Pinto Beans

TOFU

HOW TO USE

Mix into stir-fries, salads, or scrambles.



Savory Golden
Tofu



Citrus-Chile
Marinated Tofu



Crispy Tofu
Cutlets

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EGGS

HOW TO USE

Top onto bowls, mix into grain dishes, or add to warm salads.



Perfect Poached Eggs



Olive Oil Fried Eggs



Perfect Soft-Boiled Eggs



Perfect Hard-Boiled Eggs

Each of these can be added to different meals throughout the week to **keep protein intake high while keeping veggies front and center.**

Also remember that **you can increase the amount of protein in a Reinvention recipe.** So if a recipe calls for 8 ounces of ground meat, for instance, you can increase to 1 pound.

WRAPPING UP VEGETABLES FIRST, ALWAYS



As we wrap up, I want to remind you of something important: adding more protein to your plate is not about diminishing the role of vegetables—it's about enhancing the already incredible foundation you've built with Cook the Seasons.

You're doing something remarkable by prioritizing vegetables in a world that often relegates them to sad side dishes. This veggie-first approach means you're loading your body with super beneficial fiber, antioxidants, and phytonutrients -- the superpowers of the plate!

And by strategically adding more protein to this already nourishing way of eating, you're simply optimizing what's already working. I hope this guide has shown that it's even easier than you might have thought.

Remember that this journey, like all aspects of life, isn't about perfection. It's about adding tools to your toolkit, experimenting with what works for your unique body, and continuing to evolve your relationship with food.

I hope this guide has inspired you to play with protein additions while remaining rooted in the vegetable-centered approach that makes Cook the Seasons so special. Your body deserves to be nourished at every stage of life, and I'm cheering you on every step of the way!

Be nourished,

xo Lia Huber

