Complementary Proteins

Proteins are building blocks for many of your body's structures, such as muscle, bone, skin, and hair. Proteins consist of several amino acids. Our bodies can make some amino acids, but others must come from the food we eat.

Protein from plants can give you your daily protein needs and can also be a great low calorie choice. By combining certain food groups, you can make sure you get complete proteins. In general a healthy adult needs about 0.4 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day. For example: a 150-pound person needs about 60 grams of protein per day (150 x 0.4 = 60).



How much protein is in...?	
1 cup of...	Grams Protein
Peanut Butter	64
Almonds	32
Soybeans (Edamame)	22
Tofu, firm	22
Cashews	20
Red beans	15
Chickpeas	15
Quinoa	8
Spaghetti	8
Bulgur	6
Cooked Spinach	5
Brown Rice	5

Complementary proteins

Combine legumes + grains, nuts, or seeds for complete proteins.

Legumes:
beans, peas, lentils, peanuts, and soybeans

Grains:
wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley

Nuts:
cashews, pecans, pistachios, almonds

Seeds:
pumpkin, sunflower, sesame, flax

Plant-based protein-rich combinations

- Peanut butter on whole-wheat bread and a banana
- Red beans and brown rice
- Hummus sandwich (with vegetables) on whole-wheat bread with a dash of horseradish mustard
- Peanut butter and oatmeal with some berries
- Whole-grain cereal with soy milk
- Brown rice and black bean burritos

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