The NANO Diet Starter Guide

NO ANIMALS / NO OIL

A practical first week of meals, grocery checklists and Mediterranean-inspired swaps. Free, with no sign-up required.

Keep the plants. Change the cooking.

Build meals from vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Leave out animal ingredients and extracted oils—including olive oil and cooking sprays. Check packaged sauces, breads and nut butters.

Start with the job oil was doing

For sautéing, use small splashes of water or oil-free broth. For creamy sauces, blend beans or cashews with water. For pasta, use roasted vegetables and reserved cooking water. For baking, use a recipe written without oil rather than assuming a universal substitution.

Before you begin

This is a cooking plan, not a calorie target or a nutritionally complete prescription. Adjust portions and add food to suit your appetite and needs. Plan vitamin B12 reliably; review nutrient needs and medicines with a qualified clinician or dietitian. Kidney disease, pregnancy and childhood need individualized advice.

A reliable B12 plan

Watanabe F et al. (2014), Nutrients, PMID 24803097: active B12 and inactive analogues are not interchangeable. Review fortified foods or supplements with a qualified professional. Read the source.

Plan safely

This week is for one person, one recipe serving per meal, with extra food as needed. Full batches may leave spare portions. USDA recommends refrigerating leftovers within two hours (one hour above 90°F), using refrigerated leftovers within three to four days, and reheating to 165°F. Freeze later-week portions promptly; thaw safely. USDA guidance.

Your seven-day menu

Monday

Breakfast: Blueberry Walnut Morning Oats

Lunch: Citrus Barley & Lentil Salad with Beets

Dinner: Wholegrain Spaghetti with Roasted Pepper and White Bean Sauce

Tuesday

Breakfast: Pear-Orange Oats with Hydrated Chia

Lunch: Citrus Barley & Lentil Salad with Beets

Dinner: Spinach Red Lentil Dal with Mustard Seeds

Wednesday

Breakfast: Ginger Tofu Scramble with Bok Choy and Red Pepper

Lunch: Tomato Lentil Soup with Oat Parsley Dumplings

Dinner: Wholegrain Spaghetti with Roasted Pepper and White Bean Sauce

Thursday

Breakfast: Blueberry Walnut Morning Oats

Lunch: Citrus Barley & Lentil Salad with Beets

Dinner: Spinach Red Lentil Dal with Mustard Seeds

Friday

Breakfast: Pear-Orange Oats with Hydrated Chia

Lunch: Tomato Lentil Soup with Oat Parsley Dumplings

Dinner: Wholegrain Spaghetti with Roasted Pepper and White Bean Sauce

Saturday

Breakfast: Ginger Tofu Scramble with Bok Choy and Red Pepper

Lunch: Citrus Barley & Lentil Salad with Beets

Dinner: Spinach Red Lentil Dal with Mustard Seeds

Sunday

Breakfast: Blueberry Walnut Morning Oats

Lunch: Tomato Lentil Soup with Oat Parsley Dumplings

Dinner: Wholegrain Spaghetti with Roasted Pepper and White Bean Sauce

Grocery checklist / breakfasts

Quantities below buy full original batches for one person. Cross off pantry items first. Water is retained where recipes specify it. Amounts remain grouped by recipe so cooked weights, options and preparation notes are not lost.

Blueberry Walnut Morning Oats / 2 batch(es)

[ ] 2 cups rolled oats

[ ] 4 cups water or unsweetened soy milk

[ ] 2 cups blueberries

[ ] 2 bananas, sliced

[ ] 2 tbsp ground flaxseed

[ ] 2 tbsp chopped walnuts

Pear-Orange Oats with Hydrated Chia / 1 batch(es)

[ ] 1 cup dry old-fashioned rolled oats

[ ] 2 tablespoons plain unsprouted chia seeds

[ ] 3 cups water, divided, plus up to 1/4 cup for thinning

[ ] 2 medium ripe pears, cored and diced

[ ] 1 large orange, peeled and segmented; seeds removed; reserve any cutting juices

[ ] 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom

[ ] 2 tablespoons raw unsalted chopped pistachios

Ginger Tofu Scramble with Bok Choy and Red Pepper / 1 batch(es)

[ ] 600 g firm tofu, drained

[ ] 400 g bok choy, stems and leaves separated and sliced

[ ] 240 g red bell pepper, diced

[ ] 80 g scallions, sliced

[ ] 15 g fresh ginger, grated

[ ] 120 ml water

[ ] 15 ml reduced-sodium tamari

[ ] 2 g ground turmeric

Grocery checklist / lunches

Citrus Barley & Lentil Salad with Beets / 1 batch(es)

[ ] ¾ cup dry hulled barley, rinsed

[ ] 4 cups water for barley

[ ] 2 cups cooked green or brown lentils, drained

[ ] 2 medium cooked beets, diced

[ ] 2 cups finely shredded red cabbage

[ ] 1 orange, peeled and segmented

[ ] ¼ cup chopped parsley

[ ] 3 tbsp raw pumpkin seeds, finely ground

[ ] 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice, 4 tbsp water

[ ] ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Tomato Lentil Soup with Oat Parsley Dumplings / 1 batch(es)

[ ] 400 g fully cooked green lentils, drained and patted dry

[ ] 100 g rolled oats, ground finely

[ ] 25 g parsley, chopped

[ ] 400 g canned chopped tomatoes, tomatoes and juice only

[ ] 250 g carrots, diced

[ ] 200 g mushrooms, sliced

[ ] 150 g onion, diced

[ ] 10 g garlic, minced

[ ] 1200 ml water

[ ] 3 g dried oregano

[ ] 20 ml lemon juice

Grocery checklist / dinners

Wholegrain Spaghetti with Roasted Pepper and White Bean Sauce / 1 batch(es)

[ ] 300 g wholegrain spaghetti

[ ] 350 g red bell pepper, cut into wide strips

[ ] 300 g tomatoes, halved

[ ] 8 g garlic, peeled

[ ] 400 g cooked white beans, drained and rinsed

[ ] 40 g almonds, chopped

[ ] 20 ml sherry vinegar

[ ] 2 g smoked paprika

[ ] 15 g fresh parsley, chopped

[ ] 3000 ml water for cooking pasta

[ ] 15 g fine salt or half-sodium salt

Spinach Red Lentil Dal with Mustard Seeds / 1 batch(es)

[ ] 250 g dried red lentils, rinsed

[ ] 220 g spinach, chopped

[ ] 250 g tomatoes, diced

[ ] 160 g onion, finely diced

[ ] 10 g garlic, minced

[ ] 20 g fresh ginger, grated

[ ] 3 g mustard seeds

[ ] 3 g ground cumin

[ ] 2 g ground turmeric

[ ] 1 g dried chile flakes

[ ] 25 ml lime juice

[ ] 15 g fresh coriander, chopped

[ ] 1050 ml water

[ ] 3 g fine salt or half-sodium salt

Mediterranean flavors, NANO methods

Olive-oil sautéed vegetables

Use small splashes of water or oil-free broth; lift the browned bits as the pan dries.

Open the NANO recipe

Oil-rich creamy pasta sauce

Blend roasted peppers and white beans; loosen with pasta water instead of finishing oil.

Open the NANO recipe

Vinaigrette-heavy grain salad

Make a ground-pumpkin-seed, lemon and water dressing. Toss just before serving.

Open the NANO recipe

Cream or oil-enriched sauce

Blend plain cashews with water for body. Whole-food richness is not a calorie-free substitute.

Open the NANO recipe

Pizza with oil in the dough

Use our whole wheat dough, then add tomato, vegetables, herbs and an oil-free sauce; leave cheese and finishing oil out.

Open the NANO recipe

Keep the evidence in perspective

We recommend NANO as the whole-food next step. The small Barnard crossover trial favored low-fat vegan eating for several risk factors, while systolic blood pressure fell more on Mediterranean eating. Neither it nor PREDIMED tested exact NANO rules or these meals. Sources: Barnard ND et al. (2022), PMID 33544066; Estruch R et al. (2018), PMID 29897866.

Read the full comparison and citations
Open the meal plan for household-size grocery lists
Read the NANO FAQ