



Supermarket Guide

The Best of Meatless “Meats”

Faux meats, meat alternatives, meat replacers—there are lots of names, but they all mean the same thing: plant-based alternatives to meats. While meat alternatives were once restricted to select specialty shops, today grocery stores carry an increasing variety, often based on tofu, soy and other plant proteins, that offer great solutions for vegetarians, vegans or people simply interested in eating more meatless meals. Shelves are full of veggie dogs, veggie burgers, chicken-less wings, deli “meats,” “bacon” and even roasts.

You might assume that just because meat alternatives are plant-based they are automatically healthy, but that’s not always the case. Some are highly processed and may contain a fair amount of sodium. In addition, some products contain cheese and other ingredients that could drive up the saturated fat count. But have no fear; there are plenty of healthy meat alternatives available, and we’ve done all the legwork to help separate the über-healthy from the less healthy products.

Helpful hints. If you’re looking for a meat-like entrée for your plant-based meal, check out these tips to make the best choice.

- **Check the salt.** While many are fairly low in sodium compared to most processed foods, there are a handful of meat alternatives that have almost one-third of a day’s worth of sodium, according to the Dietary Guidelines daily limit of 2,300 milligrams.
- **Get protein.** Because these products are used in place of meat, make sure you obtain adequate protein. The protein content of faux meats varies greatly, depending on the main ingredients, which can include grains, vegetables, beans, tofu and soy. While most animal products contain about seven grams of protein per ounce, a guideline for meat alternatives is to look for at least 13 grams per serving—the amount found in almost two ounces of meat.
- **Not all servings are the same size.** Don’t be fooled by super-low calorie options. A typical serving of meat is three ounces, but the serving size for these faux meats ranges from less than two ounces to more than five. Those smaller portions may not provide a big nutrition boost, leaving you feeling hungry soon after eating. Balance out the rest of your meal to provide enough calories and nutrients to satisfy you.

—Heidi McIndoo, M.S., R.D.

Meat Alternatives: A Nutrition Comparison

As with all EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of what’s available. Products are listed alphabetically.

✓ = EN’s Picks. Faux meat picks contain no more than 10 g total fat (15% DV), 1.5 g saturated fat (8% DV), and 570 mg sodium (24% DV) and at least 13 g protein (26% DV).

Faux Meats	Serving Size (g)	Calories	Sodium (mg)	Pro (g)	Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
BURGERS								
Amy’s Cheddar Veggie Burger	71 (1 burger)	160	510	9	6	1.5	17	3
Amy’s Light in Sodium California Veggie Burger	71 (1 burger)	110	250	5	4	0	16	3
✓ Boca All-American Original Vegan	71 (1 burger)	70	280	13	0.5	0	6	4
Gardenburger The Original	71 (1 burger)	100	400	5	3	1	18	5
MorningStar Farms Chipotle Black Bean Burger	120 (1 burger)	210	700	17	7	1	24	7
MorningStar Farms Grillers Vegan Veggie Burgers	71 (1 burger)	100	280	12	2.5	0	7	4
Quorn Classic Burgers	160 (1 burger)	85	330	8	3.5	1.5	5	2
GROUND								
✓ Boca Ground Crumbles	57 (½ c)	70	210	13	0	0	6	3
Lightlife Gimme Lean Ground Beef Style	56 (2 oz)	60	330	8	0	0	7	3
Lightlife Gimme Lean Ground Sausage Style	57 (2 oz)	60	310	7	0	n/a	7	3
Lightlife Smart Ground Original	55 (½ c)	70	320	11	0	0	6	3
✓ Quorn Grounds	85	110	170	13	2	0.5	9	5
Tofurky Ground Beef Style	55 (½ c)	90	320	8	4	0.5	6	2
POULTRY								
✓ Gardein Chick’n Strips	67 (8 strips)	100	170	19	1.5	0	3	1
✓ Gardein Turk’y Cutlet	125 (2 cutlets)	250	390	22	9	1	20	3
✓ Gardein Zesty Marinara Crispy Chicken Filets	125 (2 filets)	240	350	22	9	0.5	19	1
Lightlife Smart Tenders Savory Chick’n	85 (3 tenders)	110	590	18	1	0	7	3
Lightlife Smart Wings Buffalo	85 (4 wings)	100	770	13	2.5	0	6	3
MorningStar Farms Chik’n Nuggets	71 (4 nuggets)	150	500	7	4	0.5	22	3
MorningStar Farms Chik’n Patties	71 (1 patty)	140	590	8	5	0.5	16	2
Quorn Chick’n Nuggets	85	210	410	10	9	1.0	26	3
SAUSAGE/DOGS								
365 Veggie Dogs	38 (1 dog)	60	270	8	1	0	4	0
✓ Field Roast Grain Meat Sausage Italian	92 (1 sausage)	240	570	25	10	1	11	4
Field Roast Grain Meat Sausage Mexican Chipotle	92 (1 sausage)	250	520	23	12	1	12	4
Lightlife Smart Dogs	42 (1 dog)	50	330	7	2	0	2	1
✓ Lightlife Smart Sausages Italian Style	85 (1 sausage)	140	560	13	7	1	7	1
Lightlife Smart Sausages Smoked Style	85 (1 sausage)	160	680	13	8	1	9	2
MorningStar Farms Veggie Corn Dogs	71 (1 dog)	150	500	7	4	0.5	22	3
Tofurky Beer Brats	100 (3.5 oz)	260	620	27	13	1	12	8
Tofurky Hot Dogs	43 (1.5 oz)	100	330	10	4.5	0	5	1
Tofurky Italian Sausage	100 (3.5 oz)	270	620	29	13	1.5	12	8
Tofurky Kielbasa	100 (3.5 oz)	240	660	26	12	1	12	8
Yves Veggie Dog	46 (1 dog)	50	400	10	0.5	0	2	0
OTHER								
365 Meatless Meatballs	60 (4 meatballs)	110	370	12	4	0	9	3
Lightlife Smart Bacon	10 (1 slice)	20	140	2	1	0	0	0
Lightlife Smart Deli Baked Ham Style	52 (4 slices)	70	300	12	1	0	4	<1
✓ Lightlife Smart Deli Roast Turkey Style	52 (4 slices)	100	290	14	3.5	0.5	4	2
Nate’s Zesty Italian Meatballs	43 (3 meatballs)	90	340	9	4.5	0	4	2
✓ Tofurky Deli Slices Hickory Smoked	52 (5 slices)	100	300	13	3	0	6	3
✓ Tofurky Deli Slices Pepered	52 (5 slices)	100	300	13	3	0	6	3
Viana Veggie Gyros	70 (20 strips)	200	840	21	10	1.5	6	2
✓ Yves Meatless Canadian Bacon	57 (3 pcs)	80	510	17	0.5	0	1	0

Note: oz=ounce, g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates, DV=Daily Value, pkg=package, n/a=not available. Daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet. Source: company websites and product packages.