A top-down view of a variety of fresh and healthy ingredients. In the top left, there are green and red bell peppers, green beans, and a small bowl of lentils. To the right is a large head of cauliflower. Below the cauliflower are several red kidney beans in a bowl. In the center, there are yellow lemons and green limes. To the right of the lemons are several ripe bananas with some brown spots. In the bottom left, there are beets, a head of broccoli, and a bowl of quinoa. In the bottom right, there are cherry tomatoes and a bowl of chia seeds. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white rectangle containing the title and author information.

A DIETITIAN'S **ULTIMATE GROCERY GUIDE**

shop like a dietitian

by Catherine Perez, MS, RD

Before You Go To the Store



- ☐ Check your inventory
- ☐ Make a list of intention
- ☐ Plan for back ups

Check Your Inventory

One of the most underrated ways to prevent yourself from overspending. You might not realize how many products you already have at home already. Avoid buying that extra bottle of ketchup that you keep forgetting you have at home. Instead, keep track of what items you finish up by keeping a dry erase board on your fridge to help keep track of what actually needs to be purchased.

Make a List of Intention

Shopping can be overwhelming. The best thing you can do is plan, and no it doesn't need to be hardcore planning. The degree of planning you do is up to you, but however you decide on your meals for the week, make a list of ingredients you do need. If that seems very overwhelming, use one of my favorite methods to shop intentionally at the grocery store. It's the **3-2-2 method**.

- **Choose 3 fruits:** 1 fruit that can last you the week (think frozen fruit), 1 fruit that you can add to meals (think smoothies), 1 fruit to snack on (think apples with peanut butter)
- **Choose 3 vegetables:** 1 hearty veggie, 1 leafy green, and 1 veggie you like to snack on
- **Choose 2 sources of protein:** variety helps, which can make meals more dynamic

Plan for Back Ups

Inevitably, life happens and you have to roll with the punches. When you run out of time to cook, consider investing on a few items to help get through those rough patches. **Keep a few canned or frozen meals on hand to use as a quick back up.** Just make sure to replenish as you eat them.

Shop by Category: Vegetables

LEAFY GREENS

- Kale (curly or lacinato)
- Swiss Chard/Rainbow Chard
- Collard Greens
- Mustard Greens
- Spinach
- Arugula
- Romaine Lettuce
- Green or Red Leaf Lettuce

Notes: I prefer Lacinato kale when making recipes as it tends to be easier to clean and easier to chew. Aim to get 1 serving of greens a day.

CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Red or Green Cabbage
- Bok Choy
- Brussels Sprouts

Notes: Kale, arugula, and collard greens also count as cruciferous vegetables. It's good to prioritize a serving daily as they contain beneficial nutrients to reduce cancer risk.

NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

- Asparagus
- Bell peppers (any color)
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Tomatoes
- Tomatillos
- Green Beans
- Mushrooms
- Summer Squash
- Zucchini
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Snow Peas
- Celery
- Carrots
- Parsnips
- Beets
- Radishes
- Jicama
- Fennel
- Chiles (Fresno chiles, jalapeños, serrano peppers, Thai chiles)
- Peas

STARCHY VEGETABLES

- Corn
- Winter Squash (kabocha squash, butternut squash, acorn squash, etc.)
- Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Plantains (green or yellow)
- Yuca



KEEP YOUR GREENS FOR LONGER

When picking up any greens, rinse and drain them really well. Dry them with extra towels. Excess moisture is what causes leafy greens to go bad quickly. Place the dry greens in a paper towel lined airtight container and store in the fridge. If the towel gets damp, make sure to change it out.

Shop by Category: Vegetables Con't

HERBS

- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Dill
- Basil
- Thai Basil
- Epazote
- Chives
- Mint
- Thyme
- Rosemary
- Sage

Notes: You can find herbs like Thai Basil and Epazote at your local ethnic markets!

AROMATICS

- Garlic
- Onions
- Shallots
- Spring Onions
- Ginger Root
- Leeks

Notes: The sulfur compounds found in garlic (like allicin) and onions may help improve the bioavailability of minerals like iron, zinc, and calcium.



HOW TO STORE DELICATE HERBS SO THEY LAST

- For **parsley, dill and mint**, remove fastenings then rinse and drain to remove debris. I like using a salad spinner to help rinse and dry. **Big key, dry your herbs very well.** Once dry, wrap in paper towels and transfer to an airtight storage container or resealable bag and store in the fridge. Change out the paper towels as needed.
- **Cilantro**, repeat cleaning and drying steps above. Trim off the ends and place in a jar with 1-inch of water. Cover with a bag and store in fridge. Change out water as needed.
- **Basil**, get the type with roots and place in a jar with water. Keep by a window sill and water regularly. It can last up to 4 weeks!



TIPS ON AROMATICS

- **Save time** by mincing and freezing your aromatics ahead of time. Peel your garlic and add the cloves to a food processor. Pulse until fully minced then transfer to an ice cube tray (1 tbsp per well). After freezing, transfer the cubes to a freezer safe bag and use as desired.
- **Rinse your ginger root then place in the freezer.** It will be much easier to grate using a microplane!
- If you already plan to chop with your cutting board, **chop extra** that can be stored in a container for other recipes during the week. You can thank your past self for the extra time you save.



Shop by Category: Fruits

FRESH FRUITS

- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Figs
- Grapes (green, red, or concord)
- Grapefruit
- Honeydew
- Kiwis
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mangoes (Kent, Honey, Keitt, etc.)
- Oranges (navels, clementines, sumo citrus, etc.)
- Passionfruit
- Peaches
- Pears
- Persimmons
- Pineapples
- Plums
- Pomegranates
- Nectarines
- Raspberries
- Watermelon

DRIED FRUIT

- Medjool Dates
- Raisins
- Apricots
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Mango
- Figs
- Currants
- Goji Berries
- Mulberries
- Freeze-Dried Fruit



HELPFUL FRUIT INFO

- Use the variety of fruit that you like best! **Choose between fresh, frozen, canned or dried.** Fruit is high in fiber and antioxidants, so finding ways to enjoy them is beneficial! To maximize on that nutrition try to opt for varieties that do not include added sugar. For canned, go for fruit packed in 100% juice. Check the ingredients and nutrition labels of other packaged fruits to ensure there is no added sugar.
- To make sure fruit stays **fresh for longer**, soak items like berries in water and a splash of vinegar. Drain and dry your fruit really well then store in airtight containers lined in paper towels.
- For the best taste, **shop with the seasons.** For example, berries tend to taste the best in the summer during their peak growing season.

Shop by Category: Plant Proteins

BEANS

- Chickpeas
- Black Beans
- Kidney Beans
- Pinto Beans
- Cannellini Beans
- Navy Beans
- Guandules
- Split Peas (green or yellow)

LENTILS

- French Lentils
- Red Lentils
- Green Lentils
- Brown Lentils
- Beluga Lentils
- Yellow Split Lentils or Moong Dal

SOY PRODUCTS

- Silken Tofu
- Medium Firm Tofu
- Firm Tofu
- Extra Firm Tofu
- Super Firm Tofu
- Edamame
- Soy Beans
- Tempeh

OTHERS

- Textured Vegetable Protein
- Plant-Based Protein Powders
- Vegan Meats
- Seitan (or make it yourself using vital wheat gluten)



NO NEED TO FEAR CONVENIENT OPTIONS ESPECIALLY IF THEY HELP YOU EAT MORE PLANTS!

While fresh cooked beans from scratch are delicious and my preferred way of enjoying beans, canned beans are still a staple and should not be feared to use. If using canned beans I recommend using low sodium varieties or rinsing them really well under cold water to remove any bubbles. This will help improve digestibility of your beans and also take a significant amount of sodium out of your beans as well!

Plant-based living is only as difficult as you decide to make it to be. So do what makes the most sense to your lifestyle and don't feel you need to shame your choices. We're all doing the best we can!



Shop by Category: Nuts, Seeds & Oils

NUTS

- Almonds, natural almond butter
- Peanuts, natural peanut butter (yes it's technically a legume)
- Cashews, natural cashew butter
- Pistachios
- Walnuts
- Pine Nuts
- Pecans
- Brazil Nuts

Notes: Brazil nuts are loaded with selenium. 1 Brazil nut a day typically contains all the selenium you need in a day. Don't overeat!

OILS

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Olive Oil
- Avocado Oil
- Vegetable Oil
- Sesame Oil
- Toasted Sesame Oil
- Chili Crisp Oil

Note: For roasting, I highly recommend using a high heat oil like avocado oil. This is a neutral oil with heart healthy monounsaturated fats that can withstand higher heat. No one wants burnt oil! For drizzling or light sauteing extra virgin olive oil is my go to.

SEEDS

- Sesame Seeds (black, white or toasted)
- Tahini (I like Alwadi or Soom Foods)
- Sunflower Seeds, natural sunflower seed butter
- Pumpkin Seeds, natural pumpkin seed butter
- Chia Seeds
- Flaxseeds, preferably ground
- Hemp Hearts

Notes: Walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds and hemp hearts are loaded with omega-3s. Aim to get 1-2 tbsp of omega-3 rich seeds in daily.



Shop by Category: Grains

REGULAR GRAINS & WHOLE GRAINS

- Quinoa
- Rice (Jasmine rice, basmati rice, black rice, wild rice, brown rice, short grain rice, etc.)
- Farro
- Pearl Barley
- Millet
- Pearl Couscous
- Oats (rolled, steel-cut, quick, etc.)
- Corn Tortillas
- Large Wheat Tortillas (regular or burrito sized)
- Pita (regular or whole wheat)
- English Muffins (regular or whole wheat)
- Sourdough Bread
- Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread
- Lavash
- Pasta (regular, whole wheat, or bean based)
- Wheat Noodles (ramen, soba, etc.)
- Rice Noodles
- Rice Paper Wraps
- Gnocchi

Note: When it comes to improving satisfaction and heart health, making at least 50% of the grains you consume whole grains is very helpful! They are packed with more fiber, which will help make getting to your recommended fiber intake much easier!

DAILY FIBER GOALS

Adult Males: 30–38 grams

Adult Females: 25–28 grams

WHAT FIBER DOES

Fiber does a few things that helps to improve our health including:

- Reduce cholesterol
- Regulate blood sugars
- Reduce cancer risk
- Support better digestion & bowel movements
- Improve satiety after a meal

Shop by Category: Spices and Flavor

SPICES & DRY HERBS

- Adobo
- Allspice
- Basil
- Bay Leaves
- Black Pepper
- Cardamom
- Chili Powder
- Cinnamon
- Coriander (ground or seeds)
- Cumin (ground or seeds)
- Curry Powder
- Dill
- Fennel Seeds
- Fine Sea Salt
- Flakey Sea Salt
- Five-Spice Powder
- Garam Masala
- Garlic Powder
- Ground Ginger
- Italian Seasoning
- Kala Namak
- Kosher Salt
- Onion Powder
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Red Pepper Flakes
- Sazón
- Smoked Paprika
- Sweet Paprika
- Thyme
- Turmeric
- White Pepper

CONDIMENTS

- Agave Syrup
- BBQ Sauce
- Buffalo Sauce (dairy-free)
- Chipotle Peppers (canned in adobo sauce)
- Garlic Chili Sauce
- Gochujang
- Hoisin Sauce
- Hot Sauce
- Hummus
- Ketchup
- Maple Syrup (pure)
- Mayonnaise (vegan)
- Mirin
- Miso Paste (yellow or white)
- Mustard (whole grain mustard and dijon)
- Nutritional Yeast
- Pickles (including sauerkraut and vegan kimchi)
- Salsas
- Soy Sauce (tamari, low sodium soy sauce, or coconut aminos)
- Sriracha
- Sweet Chili Sauce
- Tomato Paste or Sauce
- Vegetable Broth or Vegetable Bouillon (I like Better Than Bouillon)
- Vinegars (balsamic, apple cider, rice, red wine, white wine, champagne)

Shop by Category: Dairy Alternatives & Baking

DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

- Plant-Based Milk (almond, soy, cashew, oat, etc. - I commonly use Silk's Organic Soy Milk and Oatly most often for recipes)
- Plant-Based Yogurt (cashew, coconut, or soy - I most often use the large tubs of Silk's Plain Soy Yogurt or Forager Project's Unsweetened Cashew Yogurt)
- Plant-Based Cream Cheese (my favorite is from Kite Hill)
- Canned Coconut Milk (great to add to stews to make them creamy)
- Plant-Based Butter (I use Earth Balance, Country Crock, Violife, and Miyoko's)
- Vegan Cheese (I don't use a lot of vegan cheese, but when I do it's typically Violife or Miyoko's)

PANTRY ITEMS

- Aquafaba (the liquid from a can of chickpeas)
- Baking Powder
- Baking Soda
- Ceremonial Grade Matcha
- Cocoa Powder
- Coconut Flakes
- Dairy-Free Chocolate Chips and Bars
- Espresso
- Flour (all-purpose, whole wheat pastry flour, all-purpose gluten-free flour, oat flour, almond flour etc.)
- Starches (cornstarch, potato starch, tapioca starch, and arrow root)
- Sugar (granulated, light brown or coconut)
- Vanilla Extract or Vanilla Bean Paste



Shop by Meal: Breakfast

SWEET BREAKFAST

STARCH

- Oats (rolled, steel-cut, quick, etc.)
- Quinoa
- Millet
- Granola/Muesli
- Bread

ALTS

- Plant-Based Milk
- Plant-Based Yogurt
- Plant-Based Mayonnaise

PLANT PROTEIN

- Nut Butter
- Seed Butter
- Chia Seeds
- Ground Flaxseeds
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Protein Powder

PRODUCE

- Berries (Strawberries, Raspberries, Blueberries, Blackberries, etc.)
- Mango
- Peaches
- Pomegranate
- Kiwi
- Cherries
- Dried Fruit (Raisins, Dried Cranberries, Dates, etc.)
- Citrus (Lemons, Limes, Oranges)
- Pineapple
- Banana
- Pears
- Apples

FLAVOR

- Cinnamon
- Ginger
- Nutmeg
- Cardamom
- Pumpkin Pie Spice
- Vanilla Extract

SAVORY BREAKFAST

STARCH

- Bread
- Bagels
- English Muffin
- Potatoes
- Polenta
- Tortillas
- Wraps
- Quinoa
- Rice

PLANT PROTEIN

- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Beans
- Chickpea Flour

PRODUCE

- Spinach
- Mushrooms
- Bell Peppers
- Zucchini
- Summer Squash
- Tomatoes
- Onions (red, white, yellow, spring onions, shallots, etc.)
- Avocado
- Plantains

FLAVOR

- Garlic
- Smoked
- Paprika
- Cumin
- Oregano
- Basil
- Thyme
- Turmeric
- Soy Sauce
- Nutritional Yeast
- Kala Namak

Shop by Meal: Mains (Con't)

BURRITOS/WRAPS/TACOS

WRAPS

- Tortillas
- Wraps
- Taco Shells
- Rice

PROTEIN

- Beans
- Tofu
- Tempeh

FILLINGS

- Avocado
- Bell Pepper
- Corn
- Jalapeno
- Greens
- Mushrooms
- Limes
- Tomatoes
- Onions

FLAVORS

- Cilantro
- Chives
- Coriander
- Guacamole
- Hot Sauce
- Salsa
- Garlic
- Cumin
- Smoked Paprika
- Chipotle Peppers
- Green Chilies
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Fennel Seeds

SHEET PAN DINNERS

STARCH

- Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Butternut Squash
- Gnocchi

PROTEIN

- Beans
- Tofu
- Tempeh

PRODUCE

- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Bell Peppers
- Zucchini
- Asparagus
- Brussel Sprouts
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Green Beans
- Carrots
- Beets

FLAVORS

- Garlic
- Smoked Paprika
- Coriander
- Cumin
- Fennel Seeds
- Allspice
- Ginger
- Basil
- Oregano
- Curry Powder
- Oils
- Buffalo Sauce
- Barbecue Sauce
- White/Red Wine Vinegar
- Soy Sauce
- Miso Paste

STIR-FRY

STARCH

- Rice
- Quinoa
- Millet
- Noodles

PROTEIN

- Chickpeas/Edamame
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Seitan

PRODUCE

- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Bok Choy
- Bell Peppers
- Green Beans
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Chiles (Fresno, red chilies, thai chilis, etc.)
- Kimchi

FLAVORS

- Garlic
- Ginger
- 5 Spice
- Pepper
- Soy Sauce/Tamari
- Garlic Chili Sauce
- Hoisin Sauce
- Sesame Oil
- Gochujang
- Sriracha
- Maple Syrup/Agave
- Sweet Chili Sauce
- Rice Vinegar
- Miso Paste

Shop by Meal: Mains (Con't)

BURGERS/PATTIES/FALAFEL

- STARCH**
 - Burger Buns
 - Pita
 - Rice
 - Quinoa
 - Bread Crumbs
- PROTEIN**
 - Beans
 - Tofu
 - Plant Based Burger Patty
 - Frozen Falafel
 - Nuts
 - Seeds
- PRODUCE**
 - Mushroom
 - Potatoes or Sweet Potato
 - Onion
 - Tomatoes
 - Leafy Greens
- FLAVORS**
 - Fresh Herbs (parsley, Cilantro, basil, chives, mint)
 - Cumin
 - Smoked Paprika
 - Soy Sauce
 - Nutritional Yeast
 - Chipotle Peppers
 - Garlic
- SAUCES**
 - Ketchup
 - Mustard
 - Hot Sauce
 - Barbecue Sauce
 - Hummus
 - Pickles
 - Pesto

NOURISH BOWLS

- STARCH**
 - Potatoes
 - Sweet Potatoes
 - Squash
 - Quinoa
 - Rice
 - Millet
- PROTEIN**
 - Beans
 - Tofu
 - Tempeh
 - Seitan
- PRODUCE**
 - Tomatoes
 - Onions
 - Bell Peppers
 - Zucchini
 - Summer Squash
 - Kale
 - Spinach
 - Mushrooms
 - Asparagus
 - Brussel Sprouts
 - Broccoli
 - Cauliflower
 - Carrots
 - Beets
 - Bell Peppers
 - Olives
 - Avocado
 - Citrus (Lemon/Limes)
- TOPPINGS**
 - Herbs
 - Oils
 - Hot Sauce
 - Soy Sauce
 - Kimchi
 - Sauerkraut
 - Nutritional Yeast
 - Tahini
 - Hummus
 - Pesto

SOUPS/STEW/PASTA

- STARCH**
 - Quinoa
 - Noodles
 - Pasta
 - Barley
- PROTEIN**
 - Beans
 - Lentils
 - Tofu
 - Peas
- PRODUCE**
 - Carrots
 - Bell Peppers
 - Mushrooms
 - Onions
 - Corn
 - Tomatoes
 - Potatoes
 - Sweet Potatoes
 - Squash
 - Zucchini
 - Leeks
 - Cauliflower
 - Broccoli
 - Citrus (lemon/limes)
- FLAVORS**
 - Bay Leaves
 - Oregano
 - Cumin
 - Thyme
 - Vegetable Broth
 - Curry Powder
 - Chili Powder
 - Turmeric
 - Garlic
 - Ginger
 - Coriander
 - Rosemary
 - Coconut Milk
 - Parsley
 - Miso

Shop by Meal: Mains (Con't)

BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD

List at Least 3 of Your Favs

PRODUCE

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

PROTEIN

Pick at Least 1

- ☐ Beans
- ☐ Tofu
- ☐ Tempeh

STARCH

Pick 1 to Energize Your Bowl

- ☐ Grains (Rice, quinoa, farro, etc.)
- ☐ Potato or Squash

TOPPINGS

Include Your Favorites

- ☐ Dressing
- ☐ Add Crunch
- ☐ Something Herby

BUILD YOUR OWN SANDWICH

Pick at Least 1

PROTEIN

- ☐ Beans
- ☐ Tofu
- ☐ Tempeh

VEGGIES

List at Least 2 of Your Favs

- ☐
- ☐

ASSEMBLE

Don't forget these!

- ☐ Bread
- ☐ Condiment

A plant-based plate should focus on a variety of plant foods, with attention to macronutrients (carbs, proteins, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and fiber). Here's how to visualize your plate to help create a well-rounded meal:

visualize your plate



Shop by Meal: Snacks

SWEET SNACKS

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| STARCH | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bread○ Rice Cake○ Granola○ Wraps |
| PROTEIN | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Nut Butter○ Seed Butter○ Plant-Based Yogurt○ Dessert Hummus○ Nuts/Seeds |
| PRODUCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Banana○ Apples○ Strawberries○ Blueberries○ Dates○ Cherries○ Grapes○ Raisins |
| FLAVOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Cinnamon○ Ginger○ Pumpkin Pie Spice○ Fruit Jam○ Cocoa Powder○ Chocolate Chips, Dairy-Free○ Maple Syrup/Agave |

SAVORY SNACKS

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| STARCH | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bread○ Rice Cake○ Tortillas○ Wraps |
| PROTEIN | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Edamame○ Chickpeas○ Refried Beans○ Hummus |
| PRODUCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Avocado○ Bell Peppers○ Carrots○ Celery○ Cucumber○ Tomatoes○ Olives |
| FLAVOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sriracha○ Nutritional Yeast○ Plant Based Cream Cheese○ Dairy Free Pesto○ Everything Bagel Seasoning○ Hot Sauce |

Go To Meal Ideas

BREAKFAST

1

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

2

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

3

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

LUNCH

1

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

2

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

3

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

DINNER

1

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

2

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

3

Recipe

Protein

Starch

Produce

Extras

SNACKS

1

Idea

.....

+

.....

2

Idea

.....

+

.....

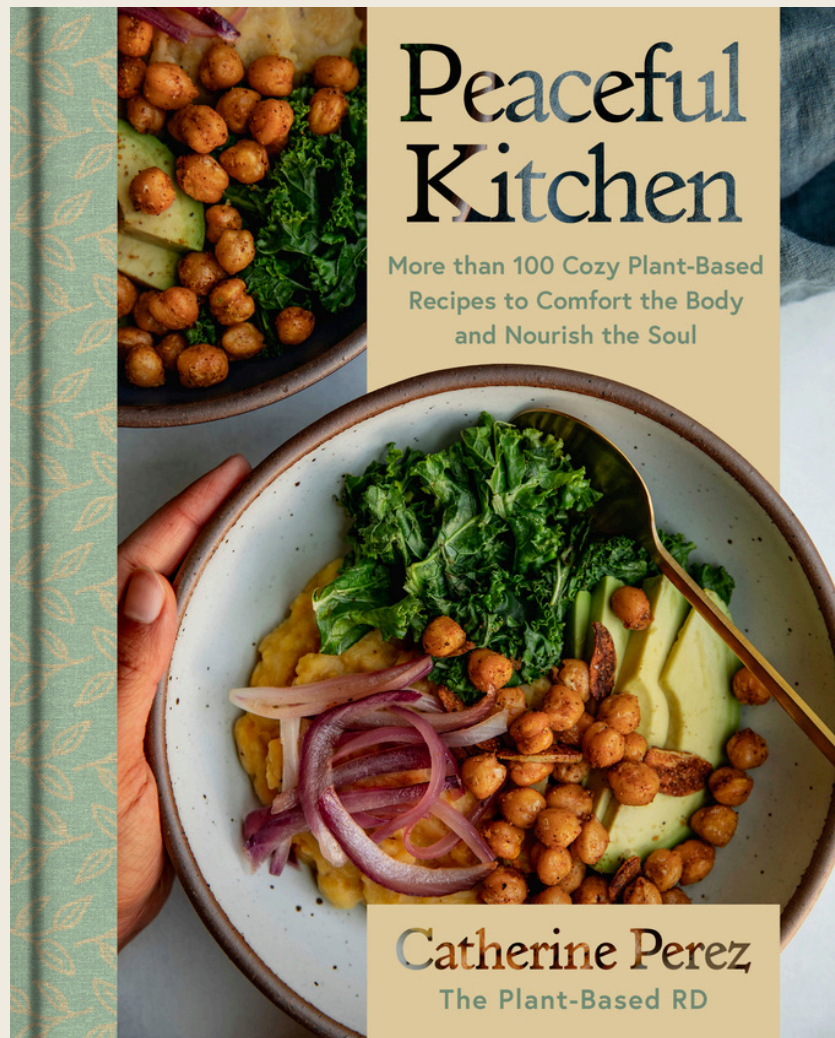
3

Idea

.....

+

.....



For more plant-based recipes and inspiration grab
my new cookbook [Peaceful Kitchen](#)!

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ultimate grocery guide by catherine perez