Monday’s are a great time to make a fresh start, or to recommit to your personal health and wellness goals. Consider the growing national movement that encourages us to improve our health, and the health of the planet, by going meatless once a week. Here are five ideas for ‘meatless Mondays’:

**Start with familiar favorites**
It’s easy to get started with foods you already like. Traditional favorites that happen to be vegetarian include pasta salads with grilled vegetables, bean soups or stir fried veggies over brown rice. As you go meatless more often, introduce additional variety; try mushroom burgers, veggie Panini’s or some edamame as a side dish or snack.

**Get back to basics**
If you stick with the basics, it’s easy to plan meatless Mondays. Start with oatmeal for breakfast. Go with a bean burrito or a bowl of hearty vegetable soup for lunch. For dinner, top some pasta with marinara sauce, roasted fall vegetables and a little grated parmesan.

**Get the entire family involved**
Motivate your family of meat lovers to join you on meatless Mondays. Involve them every step of the way. Take turns choosing what’s for dinner, shopping for ingredients and preparing the meatless meal.

**Focus on produce**
The harvest provides so many opportunities to make your meatless Monday healthier than ever. Snack on different varieties of fresh apples and pears. Sprinkle a little honey & cinnamon on baked sweet potatoes. Add hearty flavor and meat-like texture to meals with grilled, sautéed, or roasted mushrooms.

**Veg-out when you eat out**
Many of your favorite restaurants are already on board with the healthy Monday’s movement. Whether you’re at work, at school or eating out, great tasting and nutritious meatless choices are always on the menu.

---

**Fall for Mushrooms**
Go meatless with a variety of mushrooms, each with its own distinct flavor:

**White:** Also known as white button mushrooms, these are the most common, most popular mushroom sold in the US. They have a mild taste and blend with almost any food. Ideal to sauté and top your pizza, salads or veggie burgers.

**Cremini:** A little darker in color than white mushrooms, cremini mushrooms are sometimes called baby portabellas. Their earthy flavor makes them a tasty addition to any vegetable dish.

**Portabella:** These mature cremini mushrooms are quite large, some up to six inches in diameter with a deep meat like texture and flavor. Portabellas are ideal for grilling and are frequently used for sandwiches such as a ‘portabella burger’.

**Shiitakes:** Known for their rich, woody, meaty, flavor, shiitakes are traditionally added to Miso soup. They are also ideal for sandwiches and stir-fry.

**Mushrooms for nutrition and health**
Like most vegetables, mushrooms contain a variety of beneficial nutrients are low in calories and a good source of fiber. But did you know that mushrooms were chock full of:

- **B Vitamins:** Most varieties of mushrooms are a good source of thiamine, riboflavin and niacin – all B vitamins that help to provide energy.
- **Potassium:** A serving of white mushrooms contains as much potassium as a banana. Potassium helps with blood pressure control.
- **Vitamin D:** Mushrooms are one of the only fresh fruits or vegetables with vitamin D. Vitamin D helps to build strong bones.
- **Antioxidants:** Mushrooms are a leading source of selenium, an antioxidant that helps strengthen the immune system.

Enjoy mushrooms for great taste with a health boost.
Get fit
Meatless Mondays are a great way to begin the week. Starting each week with an activity that gets you moving is just as important for your health. Here are some ideas to help you ‘move-it’ every Monday.

Aim for 10,000 steps
Walking is a great ‘move-it’ Monday workout. The only gear needed is a pair of walking shoes. The average person walks about 3,000 to 4,000 steps a day. Research shows that by walking 10,000 steps each day you can burn about 300 to 400 calories and significantly improve your health. Get a pedometer and start counting your steps.

Make fitness fun
The latest fitness routine is Latin inspired dance. ‘Zumba’ is everywhere and those who enjoy these workouts say that it’s so much fun it’s like ‘exercise in disguise’. If you like to dance, get your ‘move-it’ Monday workout started with the dance style that’s right for you.

Chores can be a workout
If you live in an area where the trees provide greenery and shade, prepare for a workout! Volunteer to help with clean-up at a local park, school or place of worship and add raking leaves, helping with yard work, planting or other projects to your ‘move-it’ Monday menu. You’ll burn about 150 calories for every 30 minutes of strenuous activity.

Get fit with well rounded workouts
Every ‘move-it’ Monday is an opportunity to round-out your routine. Increase your heart rate with aerobics. Improve your muscle fitness with strength training. Add stretching to your list to build flexibility. Look for ways to add variety to your routine with a customized plan that’s right for you.

Make Monday the start of your healthy week!

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.

Mexican Mushroom Chili with Beans & Barley
Serves 12

Ingredients:
1 cup barley
4 teaspoons olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
3 (8 oz.) packages cremini mushroom, quartered
1 tablespoon chipotle chili powder (OR 2 ½ tsp chili powder plus ½ tsp ground chipotle chile)
2 teaspoons oregano, preferably Mexican
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2 fresh Anaheim chiles
1 cup frozen corn, thawed
1 (16 ounce) can chili beans, undrained
1 (15 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
2 cups water
2 ⅔ cup low sodium vegetable broth

Directions:
1. Bring 4 cups of water to boil in a large saucepot. Add barley, turn heat down and simmer 30 – 40 minutes or until cooked through. Drain any excess liquid; partially cover to keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook 2 minutes. Add mushrooms, seasonings, salt and black pepper; continue to cook 4 – 5 minutes. Stir in peppers and chiles; cook for an additional 3 – 4 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
3. Stir in all remaining ingredients except barley. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20 – 25 minutes or until flavors are melded, stirring after 15 minutes to prevent sticking. Add cooked barley and continue to cook 10 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of the Mushroom Council and mushroominfo.com

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION per serving

Calories: 222 Protein: 9g Cholesterol: 0mg
Sodium: 590mg Carbohydrates: 42g Saturated Fat: 1g
Total Fat: 3g Fiber: 10g