



PROTEIN GUIDE

Learn about protein sources, benefits,
and tips for protein optimization



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MEDICAL ALLIANCE

Ultimate Protein List

Protein

Animal-Based Proteins (Complete Proteins)

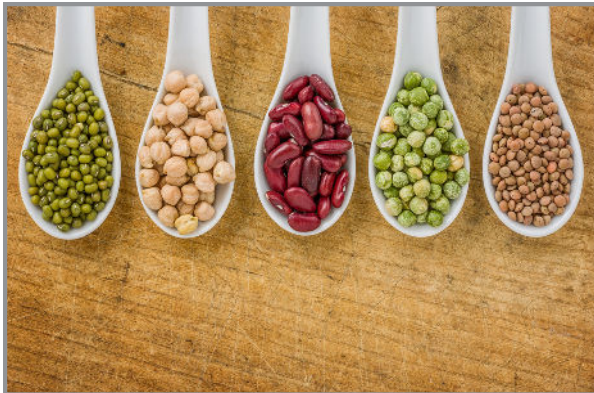
These contain all nine essential amino acids.

- Chicken breast (cooked) – 26g protein per 3 oz
- Turkey (cooked) – 25g per 3 oz
- Beef (lean, cooked) – 22g per 3 oz
- Lamb – 23g per 3 oz
- Pork (lean, cooked) – 22g per 3 oz
- Eggs – 6g per egg
- Egg whites only – 3.5g per egg white
- Greek yogurt (plain, 2%) – 15–20g per 6 oz
- Cottage cheese (2%) – 14g per ½ cup
- Parmesan cheese – 10g per oz
- Cheddar/Mozzarella – 6–7g per oz
- Salmon – 22g per 3 oz
- Tuna (canned in water) – 20g per 3 oz
- Sardines (canned) – 21g per 3 oz
- Shrimp – 20g per 3 oz
- Scallops – 17g per 3 oz



Plant-Based Proteins

Most are incomplete proteins unless combined with other plant foods, except soy and quinoa.



- Lentils (cooked) – 18g per cup
- Chickpeas (cooked) – 15g per cup
- Black beans (cooked) – 15g per cup
- Kidney beans (cooked) – 13g per cup
- Edamame (soybeans, cooked) – 17g per cup (complete)
- Tofu (firm) – 10g per ½ cup (complete)
- Tempeh – 15g per ½ cup (complete)
- Quinoa (cooked) – 8g per cup (complete)
- Buckwheat (cooked) – 6g per cup (complete)
- Hemp seeds – 10g per 3 tbsp (complete)
- Chia seeds – 5g per 2 tbsp
- Pumpkin seeds (pepitas) – 7g per 1 oz
- Sunflower seeds – 6g per oz
- Almonds – 6g per oz (~23 almonds)
- Peanuts – 7g per oz
- Natural peanut butter – 7g per 2 tbsp
- Tahini (sesame paste) – 5g per 2 tbsp
- Rolled oats (dry) – 5g per ½ cup
- Sprouted grain bread (e.g., Ezekiel) – 4–5g per slice

Ultimate Protein List

Protein Powders (Varies by Brand)

Useful for supplementation or to round out meals.

- Whey protein isolate – 20–25g per scoop (complete, fast-absorbing)
- Casein protein – 20–25g per scoop (complete, slow-absorbing)
- Collagen peptides – 10g per scoop (incomplete)
- Pea protein – 15–20g per scoop (incomplete but high in lysine)
- Brown rice protein – 12–15g per scoop (low in lysine)
- Hemp protein – 10–15g per scoop (contains omega-3s)
- Soy protein – 20–25g per scoop (complete)
- Pumpkin seed protein – 15–20g per scoop
- Blended vegan protein powders – 20–25g per scoop (aims to be complete)



Tips for Protein Optimizations

- Combine grains + legumes (e.g., rice & beans) to form a complete protein.
- Aim for 20–30g of protein per meal for optimal muscle synthesis.
- Include fiber and healthy fats with protein to support blood sugar balance and metabolism.
- Rotate protein sources to support gut microbiome and nutrient diversity.
- Plant-based diets may require higher overall intake to meet amino acid needs.



Protein + Nutrient Highlights (Whole Food Sources)

Animal-Based Proteins (Complete Proteins)

- Chicken (3 oz) – 26g protein
→ High in B6, niacin (B3), selenium, zinc, phosphorus
- Turkey (3 oz) – 25g protein
→ B6, selenium, phosphorus, tryptophan
- Beef (lean, 3 oz) – 22g protein
→ Iron (heme), B12, zinc, creatine, selenium
- Lamb (3 oz) – 23g protein
→ B12, iron, zinc, selenium, CLA
- Pork (3 oz) – 22g protein
→ Thiamine (B1), selenium, zinc, phosphorus
- Egg (1 large) – 6g protein
→ Choline, B12, vitamin D, biotin, selenium
- Greek Yogurt (6 oz) – 15–20g protein
→ Calcium, B12, iodine, probiotics
- Cottage Cheese (½ cup) – 14g protein
→ Calcium, selenium, phosphorus, B12
- Parmesan (1 oz) – 10g protein
→ Calcium, phosphorus, zinc
- Salmon (3 oz) – 22g protein
→ Omega-3s, vitamin D, B12, selenium
- Tuna (3 oz) – 20g protein
→ Selenium, vitamin D, B12, niacin
- Sardines (3 oz) – 21g protein
→ Omega-3s, calcium (from bones), vitamin D, B12
- Shrimp (3 oz) – 20g protein
→ Iodine, selenium, B12, choline
- Scallops (3 oz) – 17g protein
→ Selenium, phosphorus, B12

Plant-Based Proteins

- Lentils (1 cup cooked) – 18g protein
→ Folate, iron, magnesium, potassium, fiber
- Chickpeas (1 cup cooked) – 15g protein
→ Folate, manganese, iron, magnesium
- Black Beans (1 cup cooked) – 15g protein
→ Fiber, folate, magnesium, iron
- Kidney Beans (1 cup cooked) – 13g protein
→ Folate, manganese, fiber, iron
- Edamame (1 cup cooked) – 17g protein
→ Iron, calcium, vitamin K, isoflavones
- Tofu (½ cup) – 10g protein
→ Calcium (if fortified), magnesium, iron
- Tempeh (½ cup) – 15g protein
→ Manganese, phosphorus, B vitamins, magnesium
- Quinoa (1 cup cooked) – 8g protein
→ Magnesium, manganese, fiber, folate
- Buckwheat (1 cup cooked) – 6g protein
→ Magnesium, copper, manganese
- Hemp Seeds (3 tbsp) – 10g protein
→ Omega-3s, zinc, iron, magnesium
- Chia Seeds (2 tbsp) – 5g protein
→ Omega-3s, fiber, calcium, magnesium
- Pumpkin Seeds (1 oz) – 7g protein
→ Magnesium, zinc, iron, tryptophan
- Sunflower Seeds (1 oz) – 6g protein
→ Vitamin E, selenium, magnesium
- Almonds (1 oz) – 6g protein
→ Vitamin E, magnesium, manganese
- Peanuts (1 oz) – 7g protein
→ Niacin, folate, magnesium, biotin
- Peanut Butter (2 tbsp) – 7g protein
→ Vitamin E, niacin, magnesium
- Tahini (2 tbsp) – 5g protein
→ Copper, calcium, selenium, iron
- Rolled Oats (½ cup dry) – 5g protein
→ B1, manganese, phosphorus, fiber
- Sprouted Grain Bread (1 slice) – 4–5g protein
→ B vitamins, selenium, zinc, fiber



Protein for Strength, Brainpower & Balance

Top Picks for Muscle Maintenance

High in complete protein + leucine to support muscle repair and growth

- Chicken (3 oz) – 26g protein
- Turkey (3 oz) – 25g protein
- Beef (3 oz) – 22g protein
- Eggs – 6g per egg
- Greek yogurt (6 oz) – 15–20g protein
- Cottage cheese (½ cup) – 14g protein
- Tempeh (½ cup) – 15g protein
- Tofu (½ cup) – 10g protein
- Salmon (3 oz) – 22g protein
- Sprouted grain bread (1 slice) – 4–5g protein

Brain + Nerve Nourishing Proteins

Rich in choline, B vitamins, and omega-3s to support cognitive and nervous system health.

- Eggs – 6g protein + choline, B12
- Salmon (3 oz) – 22g protein + EPA/DHA
- Sardines (3 oz) – 21g protein + Omega-3s, B12
- Shrimp (3 oz) – 20g protein + iodine, B12, choline
- Tuna (3 oz) – 20g protein + B12, selenium
- Hemp seeds – Omega-3 ALA + magnesium
- Chia seeds – Omega-3s + fiber



High-Fiber, Plant-Based Proteins

Fiber + protein = great for blood sugar balance, satiety, and gut health.

- Lentils (1 cup cooked) – 18g protein
- Chickpeas (1 cup) – 15g protein
- Black beans (1 cup) – 15g protein
- Kidney beans (1 cup) – 13g protein
- Quinoa (1 cup cooked) – 8g protein
- Rolled oats (½ cup dry) – 5g protein
- Buckwheat (1 cup cooked) – 6g protein
- Chia seeds (2 tbsp) – 5g protein
- Hemp seeds (3 tbsp) – 10g protein

Calcium + Bone-Supportive Proteins

These proteins offer bone-building minerals like calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin D.

- Greek yogurt – Calcium, B12
- Cottage cheese – Calcium, phosphorus
- Parmesan (1 oz) – Calcium, phosphorus
- Tofu (if calcium-set) – Calcium, magnesium
- Sardines (with bones) – Calcium, vitamin D
- Chia seeds – Calcium, magnesium
- Almonds – Magnesium, vitamin E
- Tahini – Calcium, copper
- Edamame – Calcium, vitamin K

Heart + Anti-Inflammatory Focused Proteins

These support cardiovascular health and reduce inflammation.

- Salmon – Omega-3s (EPA/DHA)
- Sardines – Omega-3s, selenium
- Hemp seeds – Omega-3s + magnesium
- Chia seeds – Omega-3s + fiber
- Black beans – Fiber + folate
- Pumpkin seeds – Magnesium, zinc
- Lentils – Fiber, potassium, magnesium

BONUS TIP: Combine to Complete

Plant proteins often lack 1+ essential amino acids.

Combine:

- Rice + beans
- Hummus + whole grain pita
- Lentils + quinoa
- Peanut butter + sprouted grain bread





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