

Ways to celebrate October being World Vegetarian Awareness Month

By Toby Amidor, Food Network

Meat, dairy and high-fat ingredients are often used to add texture and flavor to recipes. Problem is, you might also be adding artery-clogging saturated fat and cholesterol. But eating a plant-based meal doesn't mean a tasteless one – make these ingredient swaps to create flavorful, filling meals with less (or no) meat and dairy.

Instead of: Beef

Try: Mushrooms

Mushrooms have a firm texture a ton of rich flavor, so they're a perfect substitute for meat. Use finely chopped porcini mushrooms for a meat-free bolognese sauce, add sliced mushrooms to chili or stew or use Portabello mushroom as a hamburger substitute.

Instead of: Chicken

Try: Tofu

Firm tofu absorbs whatever flavor you add to the dish and maintains a meat-like texture when cooked in a stir-fry, stew, chili and pasta dishes.

Instead of: Cream Sauce

Try: Homemade Plant-Based Sauces and Chutneys

Creamy sauces are a delicious once-in-awhile treat, but choosing more healthful ones for everyday meals will save you a boatload of calories and fat! Try making your own tomato,

miso or barbecue sauce. Or, top your main course with a homemade fruit or veggie chutney.

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