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COMPLEMENTARY PROTEINS

Proteins are made from small “building blocks” called amino acids. There are 8 essential amino acids which must be obtained from the diet. Animal foods such as meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, and eggs, contain all 8 essential amino acids in one food. That makes them a “complete protein.” Plant foods don’t contain all 8 essential amino acids in one food, but with complementary combining, a complete protein can be formed. Complements can be eaten over the course of the day. It is not “required” that they are eaten at the same meal. The following are combinations that result in a complete protein. **Note:** Legumes are dried beans and peas such as kidney, garbanzo, pinto, navy, soy, and black beans, as well as lentils and split peas.

GRAINS & LEGUMES

Rice and Beans	Millet and Tofu
Corn Tortillas and Black Beans	Barley-Bean Soup
Pasta and Kidney Beans	Bread and Baked Beans
Rice and Lentil Curry	Crackers and Split Pea Soup
Flour Tortillas and Pinto Beans	Wheat-Soy Bread
Brown Rice and Tempeh	Rice and Bean Casserole
Corn and Beans	Cornbread and Black-Eyed Peas

NUTS/SEEDS & LEGUMES

Hummus (blended sesame tahini and garbanzo beans)
Sunflower seeds mixed into bean chili
Sesame seeds on any bean dish
Dry roasted soybean and seed snack mix
Chopped nut/tofu veggie burgers
Seed/Nut Tempeh
Nuts with any bean dish

GRAINS & DAIRY FOODS

Macaroni and Cheese	Rice and Cheese Casserole
Cereal and Milk	Milk and Toast
Cheese and Crackers	Ravioli, Manicotti, Pizza
Rice Pudding	Yogurt and Oats
Flour Tortillas with Cheese	Cottage Cheese and Wheat Germ

Note: Dairy foods are complete proteins by themselves. However, they contain extra Lysine, which is the amino acid that is low in grains. By eating grains and dairy products together, there is enough Lysine to complement the grain.

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