

“Universal” vegetables paired with Paleo or vegetarian protein choices

I have designed this grid to accommodate families/couples where one person is vegetarian, one eats a Paleo diet, and the third eats a Modern Mediterranean diet that can accommodate Paleo and vegetarian foods.

To reduce the time spent preparing meals, both parties agree to eat the same vegetable dish, but each eats a different protein. The Paleo meals tend to contain more (and more bio-available) protein than the plant-based ones, as animal protein (meat, fish, eggs, dairy) provides all the amino acids the body needs, whereas plant foods like beans or grains only contain some, but not all, essential amino acids. Adding cheese, eggs or dairy to the vegetarian options increases their protein content.

Paleo protein	Vegetable	Vegetarian protein
Pan-fried salmon	Asparagus , e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oven-roasted and sprinkled with Parmesan shavings - steamed and lightly buttered or olive-oiled - stir-fried in olive oil with garlic) 	Parmesan omelet
Pan-fried steak (topped with garlic butter for you)	Broccoli <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steamed and tossed in melted butter or olive oil (P) dressing - Cooked in chicken stock and mashed with immersion blender - Stir-fried 	Roasted marinated tofu (Trader Joe’s has delicious, high-protein, marinated tofu)
Roasted/roisserie chicken	Cauliflower Cut into florets, tossed in olive oil and garlic powder and roasted for 15 minutes (until golden-brown) at 450F, then tossed in grated Parmesan (omit cheese for Greg)	Rosemary-scented, garlicky bean mash (see recipe in <i>Zest for Life</i>) with 2 tbsp nutritional yeast and a scoop unflavored whey protein powder stirred into the mash (this gives it a cheesy flavor and about 20g protein)
White fish, grilled, with olive oil a, lemon juice and Mediterranean herbs	Green beans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steamed and tossed in olive oil (P) or butter - In tomato sauce (see recipe here) 	Spanish potato & cheese omelet
Canned, flaked tuna/salmon OR Hard-boiled eggs	Mixed salad vegetables (e.g. lettuce, cucumber, grape tomatoes, avocado) with olive oil dressing	2 hard-boiled eggs mashed with Greek yogurt & mayonnaise → egg salad
Italian sausage	Bell peppers/baby peppers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braised with onions and garlic and a little tomato paste - Stir-fried - Oven-roasted (Cento sells delicious roasted peppers in a jar – just drain and eat!) 	White beans on a slice of toasted sourdough bread brushed with olive oil and garlic, topped with cheese and broiled for 1 minute to melt (“bean melt”)

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Meatballs (turkey, pork) in tomato sauce	<p>Zucchini</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pan-fried in olive oil with garlic & parsley - Sliced lengthwise and grilled - Steamed and mashed with garlic & olive oil or butter 	Bean burger (store-bought or homemade)
Pan-fried steak	<p>Fajita vegetable mix (peppers & onions, stir-fried at high temperature to soften and slightly char edges; TJ’s sells frozen fajita mix)</p>	Low-carb/high-protein tortilla (e.g. this brand), refried beans, egg and cheese
Add chicken, shrimp, pork or beef (thinly sliced) to the curry just before serving – bring to the boil and cook for 3-4 minutes; top with chopped cilantro	<p>Vegetable curry (e.g., white cabbage, carrots, onions & squash in a mildly spiced coconut-curry sauce)</p>	Add chickpeas and tofu to the curry and top with chopped peanuts, serve with brown rice (1/2 cup per person)
Pan-fried mahi-mahi	<p>Red cabbage and pineapple slaw (ask me for recipe)</p>	Pan-fried seitan (a vegetarian meat substitute made from wheat protein – available marinated in different flavors in the chiller section of a good supermarket or at Whole Foods)