Meatless Monday: The Right Menu for Right Now

Meatless Monday is a global movement that enables people to make positive changes in their diet — and their lives — simply by choosing not to eat meat one day a week.

Founded in 2003, Meatless Monday is now implemented by thousands of foodservice operations in over 40 countries. We’re ready to serve as your partner. And we’re 100% committed to your success.

This new guide gives you full instructions and the tools to start a Meatless Monday program in your organization. This revised edition has been composed using feedback from foodservice operations professionals at university campuses and corporate dining halls. In addition, the content has been supplemented by research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health’s Center for a Livable Future.

There is never any charge for these materials or services. Meatless Monday is part of The Monday Campaigns, a nonprofit health initiative dedicated to reducing chronic preventable diseases.

Inside, you’ll find:

- A list of Meatless Monday benefits.
- Marketing, Culinary and Operational Mini-Guides.
- Additional talking points to educate your culinary staff and front-of-house employees.
- Evaluation criteria to assess how well Meatless Monday performs.

Questions or would you like more help? Get in touch.

By implementing Meatless Monday, you’ll help your diners—both visitors and employees—move towards better eating habits. This initiative also shows your commitment to food source sustainability and the health of the planet.
Benefits of Adding Meatless Monday to Your Foodservice Operation

There are many compelling reasons to add a Meatless Monday menu to your organization. Use these talking points to build enthusiasm and strong support. Meatless Monday:

1. **Demonstrates commitment to your diners’ health.** By providing more plant-based choices on your menu, you’re helping people live healthier lives.

2. **Promotes healthy eating habits.** Choosing not to eat meat on Monday can lead to making healthier decisions throughout the week, according to a research study.

3. **Reduces environmental impact.** Decreasing meat consumption just one day a week results in a significant reduction of your carbon footprint.

4. **Projects a leadership role.** Meatless Monday places your foodservice at the forefront of promoting a healthier, more sustainable food system.

5. **Meets growing demand for plant-based dishes.** Look at the national trends and you’ll see that more people are now seeking meatless meals more often.

6. **Stimulates culinary innovation.** Meatless Monday inspires the kitchen staff to explore new cuisines as well as more wholesome, nutritious food prep methods.

7. **Provides greater choice for greater diner satisfaction.** Meatless Monday is all about more choices by offering meatless options. You can continue to serve meat on Mondays.

8. **Saves money.** Recent reports indicate the price of plant-based foods is more predictable than meat. And in many cases, plant-based foods may cost less.

9. **Easy implementation.** Meatless Monday is currently in thousands of foodservice cafeterias across the U.S., making it the most successful weekly meat reduction program in America.

10. **Fosters collaboration among professions** focused on foodservice as well as human and environmental health by demonstrating the value of adding more plant-based options into consumer diets.
Getting Started: 6 Steps to a Successful Introduction

Meatless Monday is credited with helping millions of people eat healthier each week by reducing their meat consumption. And getting a program started couldn’t be easier. Just feature some vegetarian and vegan dishes on Monday—while continuing to serve some meat options. Here are six steps to get started.

1 **Commit to Meatless Monday.** Educate your key stakeholders on the health, environmental and business benefits. Meet with your team and your clients. Use this sample letter and talking points to gain support.

2 **Set goals.** Determine a success criteria and how to measure it. Use the worksheet in this guide to establish key performance indicators, develop culinary strategies and set a baseline before you begin.

3 **Organize your crew.** Set your start date and create a things-to-do timeline leading up to it. Define your menu using these popular meatless dishes for inspiration. Train your culinary team on the new recipes and make sure your crew understands the advantages of a Meatless Monday program. To help them prepare, use our Tips for Training Your Staff worksheet that appears in the back of this guide.

4 **Go!** Announce your Meatless Monday launch on your employee web portal and your email database. Place posters and promotional materials in your dining areas to drive awareness.

5 **Promote Meatless Monday regularly.** Feature your weekly plant-based specials. Use our Marketing Strategies Mini-Guide for ideas.

6 **Share your progress.** Join the Meatless Monday communities and share best practices with other foodservice organizations.
Let’s Get Specific

We’ve included some additional information to help get you up and running. Here you’ll find Mini-Guides that cover Culinary, Marketing and Operational. Take a look at the topics that interest you.
Culinary Strategies

Fresh Ideas for Your Meatless Monday Menu

The thinking behind a Meatless Monday menu is simple. Just develop and highlight vegetarian and vegan options to offer your diners each Monday. Here are some recommended suggestions based on successful practices in the field.

• **Make Meatless Monday your featured choice.** Let your diners know these are special dishes to try today. (Remember, you can also offer meat dishes on Monday.)

• **Change offerings weekly or monthly.** Keep things fresh and entice with seasonal recipes. Consider:
  - Meatless swaps
  - New ingredients
  - Global cuisine and flavors

• **Highlight newest dishes.** Have your wait staff suggest them to diners and promote with POS to give diners a reason to try.

• **Set up a sampling and cooking demo station.** Make Monday a special event to attract attention and win more sales.
Menu and Recipe Strategies

- Challenge your staff to come up with new meatless recipes.
- Reach out to local chefs for new ideas on plant-based dishes.
- Ask your company to share Meatless Monday recipes from other websites.
- Inspire your cook staff by educating them on prep work and cooking techniques they may not know.
- Take an innovative approach to creating flavors using fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, herbs and seasonings, as well as cooking techniques, such as toasting or infusing.
- Explore exotic global flavors and ethnic cuisines that substitute vegetables for meat in traditional recipes.
- Feature specific ingredients based on seasonality. Serve your diners locally grown produce at the peak of flavor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swap</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Minerals</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pasta w/ground turkey marinara</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>9.5g</td>
<td>0g</td>
<td>4% potassium</td>
<td>Beans and ground turkey have similar calories and protein, but beans have more fiber blood-pressure regulating potassium and blood-building iron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta w/white beans and marinara</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>9g</td>
<td>5.5g</td>
<td>14% potassium</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black bean taco salad (1/2 cup beans)</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>8g</td>
<td>7.5g</td>
<td>0g total saturated</td>
<td>Beans, especially black beans, contain high levels of antioxidants that you can’t find in animal proteins such as ground beef.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Swap</th>
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<th>Cholesterol</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp stir-fry (2 oz shrimp)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11.5g</td>
<td>0g</td>
<td>87mg</td>
<td>Soybean foods such as edamame may help lower cholesterol, reduce risk of certain types of cancer and improve bone health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edamame stir-fry (1/2 cup beans)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8.5g</td>
<td>4g</td>
<td>0mg</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Source: USDA Nutrient Database
What’s Hot – New Food Trends

Stay on top of the increased appetite for delicious meatless meals. Check out this trend report from the National Restaurant Association. Among the items to follow:

- Healthful kids’ meals
- Protein-rich grains/seeds
- Natural ingredients/clean menus
- Environmental sustainability
- Authentic ethnic cuisines
Meatless Menu Ideas

Need help with meatless meals for Mondays? Here are some suggestions to get you started:

**American**
- Baked beans
- Baked potato (build your own with salsa, veggies, low-fat cheese & sour cream)
- Chickenless Caesar salad wrap
- Cottage cheese with fruit
- Eggplant or zucchini casserole
- Garden burgers
- Grilled vegetable panini
- Stuffed tomatoes or bell peppers
- Three-bean salad
- Portobello stuffed with wild rice
- Vegetable wraps
- Vegetarian chili

**Mediterranean**
- Falafel in a pita
- Greek salad

**Indian**
- Lentil soup
- Sandwiches with hummus & sprouts
- Spanikopita (Greek spinach pie)
- Stuffed grape leaves

**Italian**
- Eggplant parmesan
- Panzanella (tomato salad with white beans on Italian bread)
- Pasta primavera
- Ravioli stuffed with sweet potato, butternut squash, mushroom, pumpkin or spinach
- Risotto
- Spaghetti with marinara
- Spinach tortellini

**Asian**
- Stuffed shells with spinach & low-fat ricotta or tofu
- Vegetable lasagna
- Veggie meatball or eggplant subs with low-fat mozzarella

**Latin & Mexican**
- Pad Thai
- Sesame noodles
- Szechuan tofu
- Tofu & vegetable stir-fry
- Vegetarian tacos
Marketing Strategies

Get the Message Out and the Diners In

More people are health-conscious these days. That’s why Meatless Monday makes such great sense. By choosing not to eat meat just one day a week, diners reduce their risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and cancer.

Promote this program with a full suite of ready-to-use collateral materials, such as posters, table tents and other merchandising items. Or feel free to adapt these items to work with your existing marketing materials. Actively promote Meatless Monday to keep it top of mind.

Here are a few ideas:

- **Capitalize on employee communications.** Use e-newsletters, employee portals and other communications channels.

- **Enlist your client** to find creative ways to publicize this program.

- **Recruit ambassadors** who are passionate about sustainable food as advocates.

- **Maximize social media.** Use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat to broaden your reach and attract new diners. Promote your plant-based dishes with a delicious photo and a special price.

- **Encourage your staff to engage diners.** Have them talk up the unique flavors and health benefits of Meatless Monday dishes.

- **Promote Meatless Monday in your dining hall.** Display the appetizing posters, table tents and other merchandising materials that are ready for download. Feel free to customize them for your specific needs.
We gathered feedback from organizations that have implemented Meatless Monday and learned that customers respond well when they realize the many health and environmental benefits of going Meatless Monday.

From your desktop or laptop, download the ZIP file to access the full promotional kit – posters, signs, table tents and graphics.

Want more Meatless Monday tools or have questions? Email us at: info@MeatlessMonday.com
Operational Guidelines

Setting Up for Launch

Adding a Meatless Monday program is remarkably easy from an operational standpoint. You can still use your approved purveyors and order from their product lists. If you expand beyond your usual vendors, here are a few tips to consider:

- Work with your culinary team to set a schedule. Determine your Meatless Monday launch date and the dining service areas that will offer this menu — both employee and retail locations are recommended.
- Place your order earlier than usual. Allow yourself a little extra time to get used to a revised purchase list and purchase patterns.
- Accommodate a wider assortment of plant-based ingredients. Keep beans, grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and other plant-based foods on hand. Ask your suppliers about new items they could offer for your ongoing menu.
- Identify specialized foodservice distributors in your area. Look for sources of fresh, locally grown produce. Highlight them on your menu.

Culinary

- Set your Meatless Monday menu and plant-based ingredient list.
- Train your prep and line work staff on the new recipes.
- Train your service staff on Meatless Monday talking points to discuss with diners.

Marketing

- Use the Meatless Monday promotional materials to help educate diners on the health benefits of choosing not to eat meat one day a week.
- Publicize your Meatless Monday introduction internally and on social media using the Meatless Monday promotional materials.
- Design customized POS collateral for your organization using Meatless Monday promotional materials.
- Distribute a press release on the program’s launch to inform and engage the community.

Operational

- Work with your distributors to check pricing and availability of your purchase orders.
- Determine any adjustments you’ll need to make in the kitchen to handle prepping more plant-based ingredients.
- Post a schedule for staff to change the point-of-sale materials during the week.
Dear Colleague,

I’d like your help to start a Meatless Monday program for our foodservice. This effort will enable our diners to make healthier choices when eating—as well as improve the health of the planet.

Meatless Monday is a science-based public health initiative associated with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Its goal is to reduce chronic preventable diseases by encouraging less consumption of meat. By adopting Meatless Monday, we can:

**Demonstrate industry leadership.** We’ll join hundreds of other forward-thinking foodservice operations that are guiding the U.S. towards a healthier, more sustainable food system.

**Promote healthy habits.** Choosing not to eat meat on Monday can lead to making healthier food decisions throughout the week, according to a recent [study](#).

**Reduce environmental impact.** Decreasing meat consumption just one day a week results in a significant reduction to our [carbon footprint](#).

In short, Meatless Monday features dishes made without meat each Monday. To be clear, dishes with meat would still be served on Monday as well as other days of the week. We’re simply providing healthier, meatless options on Monday.

I hope you’ll support me in this effort. Let me know if you’d like to meet to discuss this topic in further detail. I’ll be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNATURE)
Foodservice Goal Setting Worksheet

After committing to start a Meatless Monday program, it’s important to align your goals, so you’ll be able to measure your success and the value of your service. Establish a baseline before you begin.

Here are some suggested goals that apply to your foodservice operation, diners’ health and the health of our planet.

**Diner Satisfaction**

- Did diner satisfaction scores improve after launching Meatless Monday or at least stay the same?
- Did diner traffic increase or at least stay the same on Mondays after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did guest traffic increase or at least stay the same each week after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did employee traffic increase or at least stay the same each week after launching Meatless Monday?
- Are the new vegetarian and vegan dishes featured on Monday at least as popular as the other dishes that were previously offered?

**Foodservice Operations**

- Did food costs stay the same or go down after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did labor costs stay the same or go down after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did sales stay the same or go up after launching Meatless Monday?

**Cost Analysis**

- Did the amount of meat purchased each week go down after launching Meatless Monday? And by how much?
- Was the cost of fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts purchased each week less than the price of preparing comparable meat dishes?

**Online Survey**

- Once your site has been implementing Meatless Monday for a few months, please help us evaluate the success of the program by filling out this brief survey.
Tips for Training Your Staff

Your diners are likely to have questions about your Meatless Monday program. Here are some tips on how to prepare your service staff:

- Hold a pre-shift meeting each Monday to go over which dishes are being offered that day. Key talking points are indicated on the right.
- Place educational materials in the breakroom, including posters, table tents and brochures.
- Host a staff training session before launching your program with both back and front-of-the-house employees.
- Send out an employee email containing links on the Meatless Monday program for future reference.
- Keep Meatless Monday educational brochures in your dining hall for employees to refer to or hand out when asked questions.
- Integrate information on Meatless Monday into your new employee training program.

Key Talking Points for Staff Training

- Meatless Monday is a global movement with a simple message: choose not to eat meat, one day a week.
- Meatless Monday’s goal is to reduce meat consumption by 15% for our personal health and the health of the planet.
- Why Monday? It’s the fresh start of the week – an ideal day to make healthier choices.
- There are significant health benefits to eating less meat, even just once a week. These include decreased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and cancer.
- There are significant environmental benefits to eating less meat, even just once a week, such as reducing our carbon footprint, our water footprint and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Each Monday we feature vegetarian dishes to help reduce the overall consumption of meat.
- Even though we feature vegetarian dishes on Monday, we’ll still have a variety of meat dishes to choose from.

Online Resources

In addition to the new Meatless Monday promotional campaign, we have other creative materials to get your customers excited about the Meatless Monday movement. Click here to access posters, web graphics and more.

Contact Info

Or get in touch with us at: info@MeatlessMonday.com