



Culinary Institute
of America

Plant Forward Kitchen Boot Camp

Day 2



Learning Objectives

- Understand the proper selection and preparation of fruits and vegetables.
- List different blended vegetable dishes.
- Understand the cooking methods for legumes and grains.
- Identify different herbs and spices and their uses in plant-forward cooking.
- Understand how to build flavors in plant-forward dishes.
- Recognize the common plant-forward staple ingredients and characteristics of different global cuisines.
- Prepare plant-forward dishes using standardized recipes.

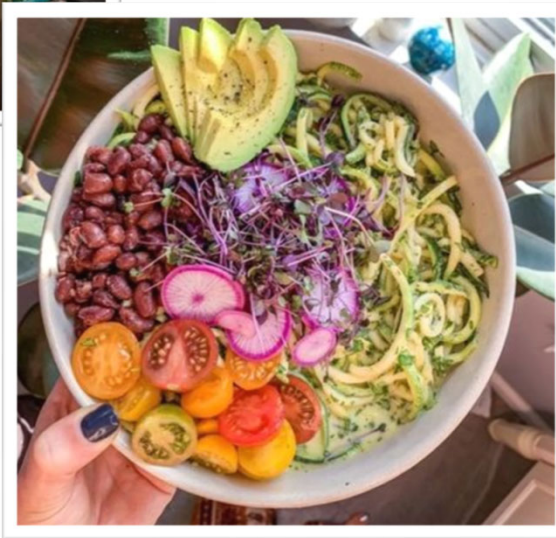
Fruits & Vegetables

Increasing fruit & vegetable consumption can:

- Lower cholesterol
- Lower risk of heart disease
- Lower risk of cancer
- Limit unhealthy fats & excess calories
- Help with weight management
- Keep skin & hair healthy



Selecting Fruits & Vegetables



- **Buy local:** Locally-produced food is fresher & supports nearby communities
- **Stay in season:** Reduce environmental impact & enjoy better flavors
- **Keep it fresh:** Avoid added sodium & preserve nutrients
- **Eat the rainbow:** Choose a colorful variety of fruits & vegetables for better health

Cooking Vegetables

- Minimal additions of fat & salt are ideal
- **Steaming:** preserves nutrients
- **Stewing/ braising:** helps break down roots & brassicas
- **Grilling:** adds flavor but lowers nutritional value
- **Boiling/ blanching:** softens textures but loses water-soluble vitamins
- **Puréeing:** versatile; can make soups, sauces, & thickeners
- **Roasting:** increases natural flavors



Blended Dishes



- Incorporates vegetables into dishes without changing flavor/texture
- Good method for increasing daily fiber intake
- **Examples:**
- Burgers with meat + mushrooms
- Hidden veggie pasta sauces
- Cakes with chocolate & beets
- Zucchini bread
- Cauliflower mac & cheese

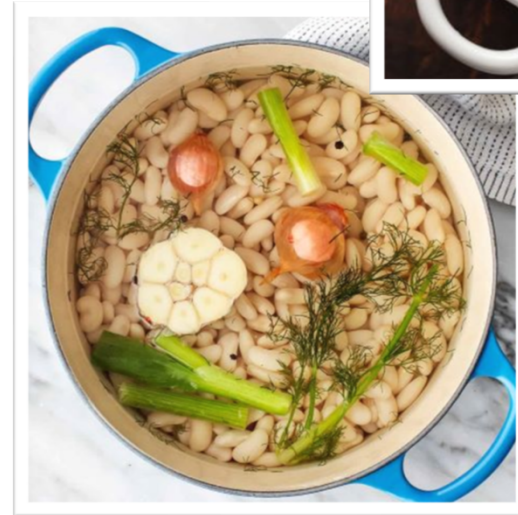
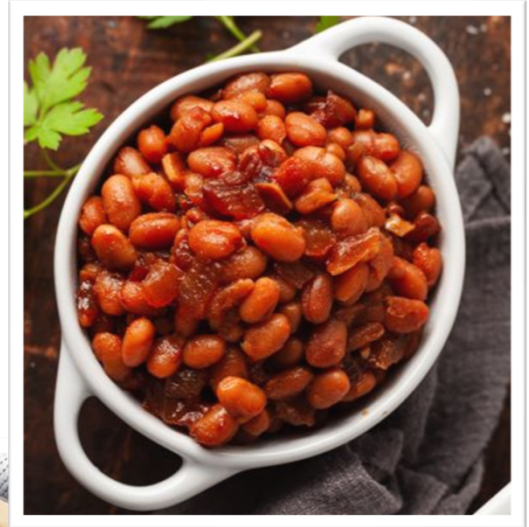
Legumes

- A seed, pod, or other edible part of a leguminous plant
- Considered nutrient-dense superfoods
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas, & split peas are most common
- Legumes + grains = complete proteins
- Rich in dietary fiber and beneficial for gut health
- Can help lower cholesterol & control blood sugar



Cooking Legumes

- Soak dried beans before cooking
- If using canned beans, opt for low/ reduced-sodium
- Different legumes absorb a different amount of cooking liquid
- Chickpeas & kidney beans require the longest cooking times
- Keep legumes fully submerged in liquid while cooking
- Batch-cook legumes & freeze in portions for convenience



Grains

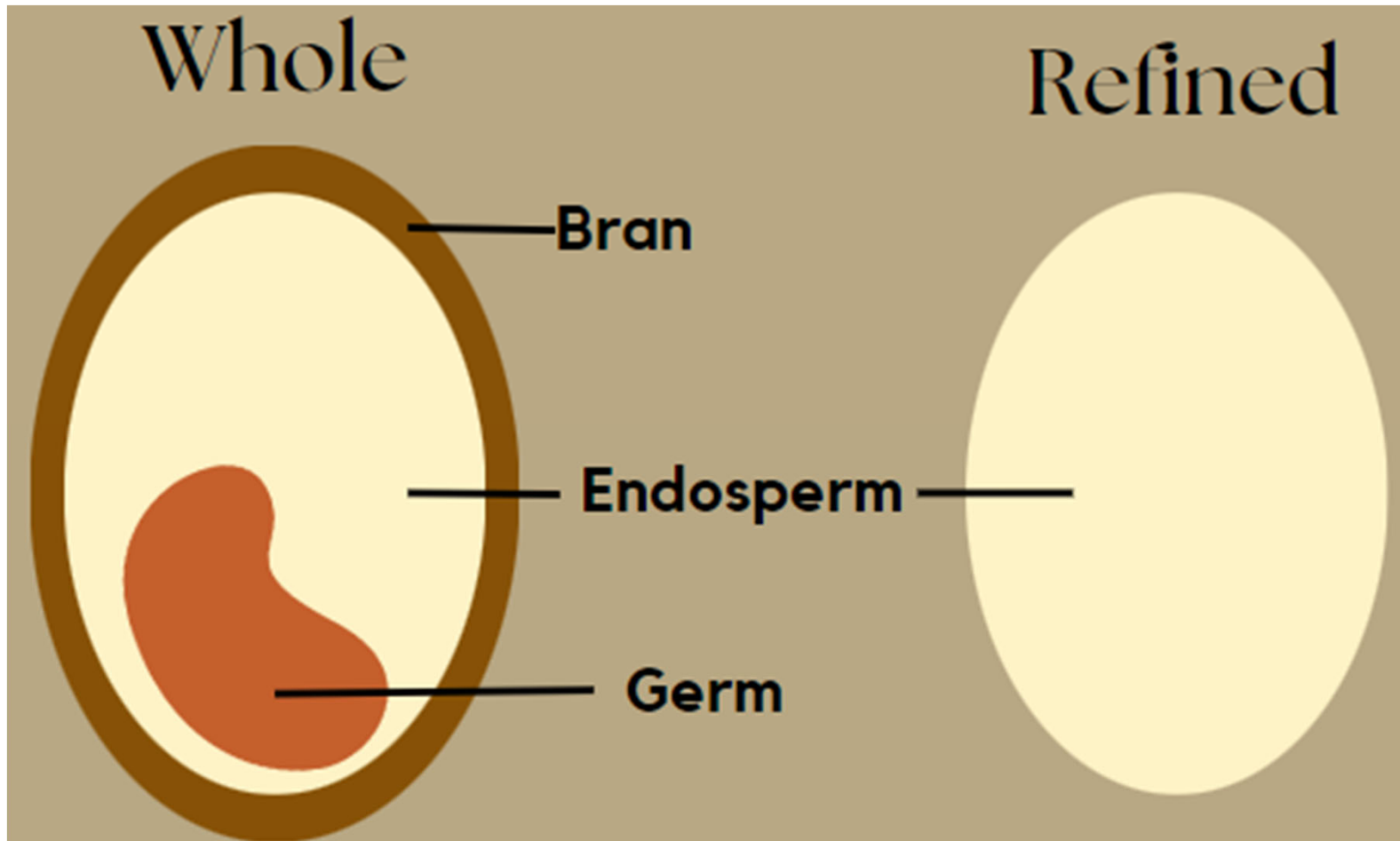
Whole grains

- Have the nutrient-rich endosperm, bran, & germ
- Contain fiber & protein
- Should be ½ of all the grains consumed daily
- Have more flavor
- Can spoil quicker
- Examples: barley, brown rice, bulgur, rye berries, popcorn

Refined grains

- Have only the endosperm
- Are low in fiber, protein, & other nutrients
- Have a milder flavor
- Stay shelf-stable for longer
- Examples: white rice, white bread, pasta, crackers, baked goods

Grains



Cooking Grains

- The best cooking method depends on the type of grain
- Steaming, boiling, & pressure cooking are most common
- Water, stock, or broth can be the cooking liquids
- Can be served both chilled & hot
- Add more cooking time for a slightly softer texture
- Soak hardy grains beforehand to soften texture & reduce cooking time



Herbs & Spices



- Boost flavor without adding fat or salt
- Fresh ground spices are more flavorful
- Avoid excess sodium in store-bought spice blends
- When substituting, use 3x more fresh herbs than dried
- Add delicate herbs at the end of cooking to maintain flavor
- Add hearty herbs earlier to infuse dishes

Global Cuisines

- Look to global cuisines for inspiration
- Many cuisines follow the tenets of plant-forward cooking
- Learn about unique techniques & ingredients for plant-forward dishes
- Find new ways to cook unpopular plant foods
- Experiment with different flavor combinations
- Keep plant-based cooking exciting



Northern China

- **Flavors:** Robust, savory, salty
- **Staples:** Soy sauce, garlic, ginger, scallions, wheat
- **Vegetables:** Pickled vegetables, eggplant, wood-ear mushrooms
- Heavy sauces with bold flavors from fermented pastes
- Hand-pulled noodles & steamed buns rather than rice
- Some dairy products from proximity to Mongolia



Southern China



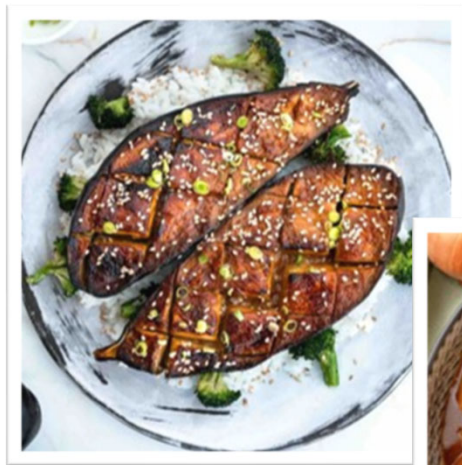
- **Flavors:** Fresh, spicy, sweet
- **Staples:** Rice, chiles/ Sichuan peppercorns, chile pastes, brunch (dim sum)
- **Vegetables:** Lotus root, Szechuan chiles, bok choy, bitter melon
- More commonly seen in the U.S.
- May share Southeast Asian staple flavors & ingredients due to proximity

Vietnam

- **Flavors:** Sweet, sour, bitter, spicy, & salty, AKA "The Five Tastes" (*ngu vi*)
- **Staples:** Fresh cilantro, basil, & mint, fish sauce, lime, garlic, chiles
- **Vegetables:** Water spinach (*rau muong*), mung bean sprouts, lettuce
- Northern foods feature light, clean flavors & avoids spice
- Central Vietnam favors hearty, filling, & spicy foods
- South Vietnamese cuisine uses tropical ingredients & sweet flavors



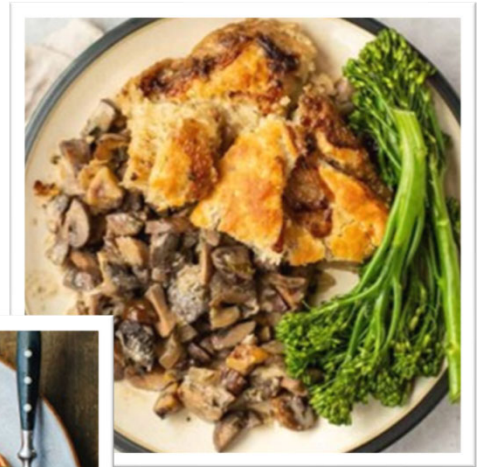
Japan



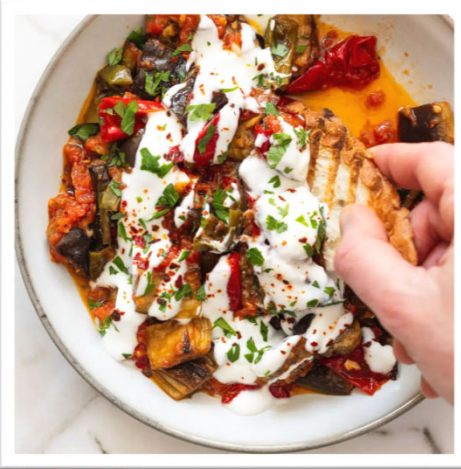
- **Flavors:** Clean, salty, umami
- **Staples:** Soy sauce, miso paste, rice, seaweed (*kombu*), rice wine (*mirin*)
- **Vegetables:** Cabbage, Japanese eggplant (*nasu*), bamboo shoots, root vegetables
- Simple & natural flavors, highlighting the essential qualities of food
- Buddhist vegan cuisine (*shojin ryori*) is focused on holistic healing & aiding mindfulness

Europe

- **Flavors:** Vary heavily by region
- **Staples:** Olive oil, whole grains, fresh herbs, fish, seafood
- **Vegetables:** Root vegetables, legumes, cabbage, tomatoes, zucchini
- Strategic use of red meats, butter, cheese, & fried foods
- Produce is abundant due to availability & Mediterranean influences
- Lots of gut-healthy dairy products
- Mostly whole, minimally processed foods



Turkey



- **Flavors:** Fresh, herbaceous, savory
- **Staples:** Whole grains, fresh herbs, *sumac*, olive oil, Aleppo pepper, yogurt
- **Vegetables:** Legumes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, okra
- Grains are very common, often cooked pilaf-style
- Turkish *meze* tradition emphasizes small portions, social connection, & fresh vegetable dishes

North Africa

- **Flavors:** Earthy, robust, spiced
- **Staples:** Couscous, harissa chile paste, preserved lemons, ginger, hot peppers, cumin
- **Vegetables:** Dark leafy greens, tomatoes, eggplant, legumes, olives
- North African foods use spice blends to add intense flavors
- Cooked salads are a flavorful way to consume more vegetables



Eastern Mediterranean



- **Flavors:** Bold, citrusy, herbal
- **Staples:** Whole grains, fresh herbs, olive oil, yogurt (*labneh*), saffron, tahini, citrus
- **Vegetables:** Legumes, tomatoes, root vegetables, cucumbers, eggplant
- Vegetables are the center of the table & meat is consumed in small amounts
- Not heavily spiced, more focus on herbs & citrus for bold flavors

Mexico

- **Flavors:** Fresh, spicy, tangy
- **Staples:** Cilantro, cumin, lime, epazote, seafood, rice
- **Vegetables:** Corn, beans, squash, chiles, tomatoes/ tomatillos, garlic
- Moles are complex sauce preparations that can employ spices, nuts, or vegetables, among other ingredients
- Relies heavily on the layering of textures

