

VEGETARIAN IRON OPTIMIZATION

A reference guide for Non-Heme Iron absorption

High-Iron Plant Foods

FOOD ITEM	SERVING
Lentils (Cooked)	1 Cup
Spinach (Cooked)	1 Cup
Pumpkin Seeds	1/4 Cup
Tofu (Firm)	1/2 Cup
Blackstrap Molasses	1 Tbsp

Absorption Factors

TYPE	EXAMPLE
Enhancer	Vitamin C (Citrus)
Enhancer	Beta-Carotene
Inhibitor	Tannins (Tea/Coffee)

TYPE**EXAMPLE****Inhibitor**

Calcium Supplements

Inhibitor

Phytates (Whole Grains)

Quick Strategies

- **The C-Pairing:** Always eat iron-rich grains or legumes with a squeeze of lemon, bell peppers, or strawberries.
- **Timing:** Consume tea or coffee at least 1 hour before or after iron-rich meals.
- **Preparation:** Soaking, sprouting, or fermenting grains and seeds reduces phytates that block iron.
- **Cookware:** Cooking acidic foods (like tomato sauce) in cast-iron pans can increase iron content.

Note: Consult a healthcare professional before starting supplements.