



# Plant-Strong on the Road!

By Rip Esselstyn  
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Staying plant-strong while you're traveling via planes, trains, and automobiles is a piece of cake (or even better, a piece of kale). I've been traveling a ton lately. In fact, in February I was on the road 22 out of 29 days! I was plant-strong and ripping it up day after day after day.

Here are some of my tips for staying fabulously plant-strong—no matter where you are. You can remember these with the acronym F.A.B.:

## 1. Figure out what you can eat.

Use the menu as a list of ingredients. A 100 percent plant-strong meal might not be listed on the menu, but maybe the restaurant uses some ingredients in other meals that are completely plant-strong. For instance, you might notice steamed vegetables and potatoes in one dish, and black beans in another. Well, the three together make for a great plate! Sometimes it is helpful to call ahead. You'd be surprised how many chefs will rise to the occasion and love making you a fabulous plant-strong meal. They may even come out to your table and let you know how much they enjoyed getting creative with your meal.

## 2. Ask for what you want.

Ask your waiter or waitress if a dish can be prepared with veggie broth instead of oil. Ask if they have whole-grain options. I've been told that the **Pei Wei** chain of restaurants is very accommodating with requests for plant-strong meals. You can ask for almost any dish to be made with brown rice and to have steamed vegetables and tofu instead of the meat. And get this: They will cook your meal using vegetable stock instead of oil! They call it "stock-velveted." Sounds cool! Incidentally, their parent restaurant, **PF Chang's**, will do the same thing.

## 3. Bring your own food.

I always pack a solid amount of food to take with me whenever I travel so that I have options on the plane or afterward when renting a car, driving to my next destination, etc. You can pack things such as the **Rip's Big Bowl** or oatmeal and raisins for a quick breakfast in a hotel room. You can also pack soups, and there is even vacuumed-sealed cooked brown rice available for sale at most stores, so all you have to do is reheat it. You can make plant-strong burritos and sandwiches and pack them in a cooler for road trips as well.

## More Tips on Eating Out

Technology is your friend when it comes to finding vegan meals on the go. Check out the **Vanilla Bean app** and **HappyCow** to find all the vegan-friendly restaurants near you. **Yelp** is another great tool for finding nearby restaurants with vegan options.

Here are some tips for other restaurants:

- **Asian restaurants:** Ask for brown rice, steamed vegetables, steamed edamame, or tofu, hold the extra sauces, and use low-sodium soy sauce sparingly. Another good option is brown rice vegetable sushi.
- **Italian:** Go for whole-grain pasta and tomato sauce (with no cheese added), and ask them to throw in as many grilled/steamed vegetables as they can find!
- **Steakhouse/American:** Believe it or not, you can get a great meal at a steakhouse. Ask for potatoes, sweet potatoes, and lots of steamed vegetables. You can also ask for a huge salad. Ask your waiter for a salad with every fresh vegetable they

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have on hand (and even fruit), with a side of balsamic vinegar (or sneak in your own plant-strong dressing).

- **Breakfast spots:** Ask for oatmeal made with water or plant-based milk, fruit, and some nuts. You can also ask if they have whole-grain bread, a little nut butter, and some fruit.
- **Coffee shops:** Hot herbal tea is always a great option. Most coffee shops carry plant-based milk now as well instead of using dairy creamer. If you are having a snack, go for something like oatmeal. You can also get a little bit of dried fruit and nuts at many places. I'm a frequent flyer and go for the Starbucks oatmeal, which is available in almost all airports.
- **Gas stations:** If you are on the road, you can find fruit at most convenience stores, and sometimes whole-grain pretzels or unsalted nuts as well.
- **Grocery stores:** Don't forget local grocery stores! You can get items such as oil-free hummus, whole-grain crackers or bread, cut-up vegetables/fruit, and low-sodium cans of beans (just be sure to pick up a cheap can-opener). You can even buy potatoes and frozen vegetables to microwave later in the hotel room. Or, you can make a great trail mix with whole-grain cereal, raisins, and a few nuts. Many grocery stores also have salad bars where you can make a great plant-strong meal. Go to [wholefoods.com](http://wholefoods.com) and find the closest Whole Foods Market and look for the Health Starts Here logo in the prepared foods section for oil-free, plant-strong options.

The bottom line is that no matter where you are, there are plant-based options to be found.

Stay plant strong anywhere!