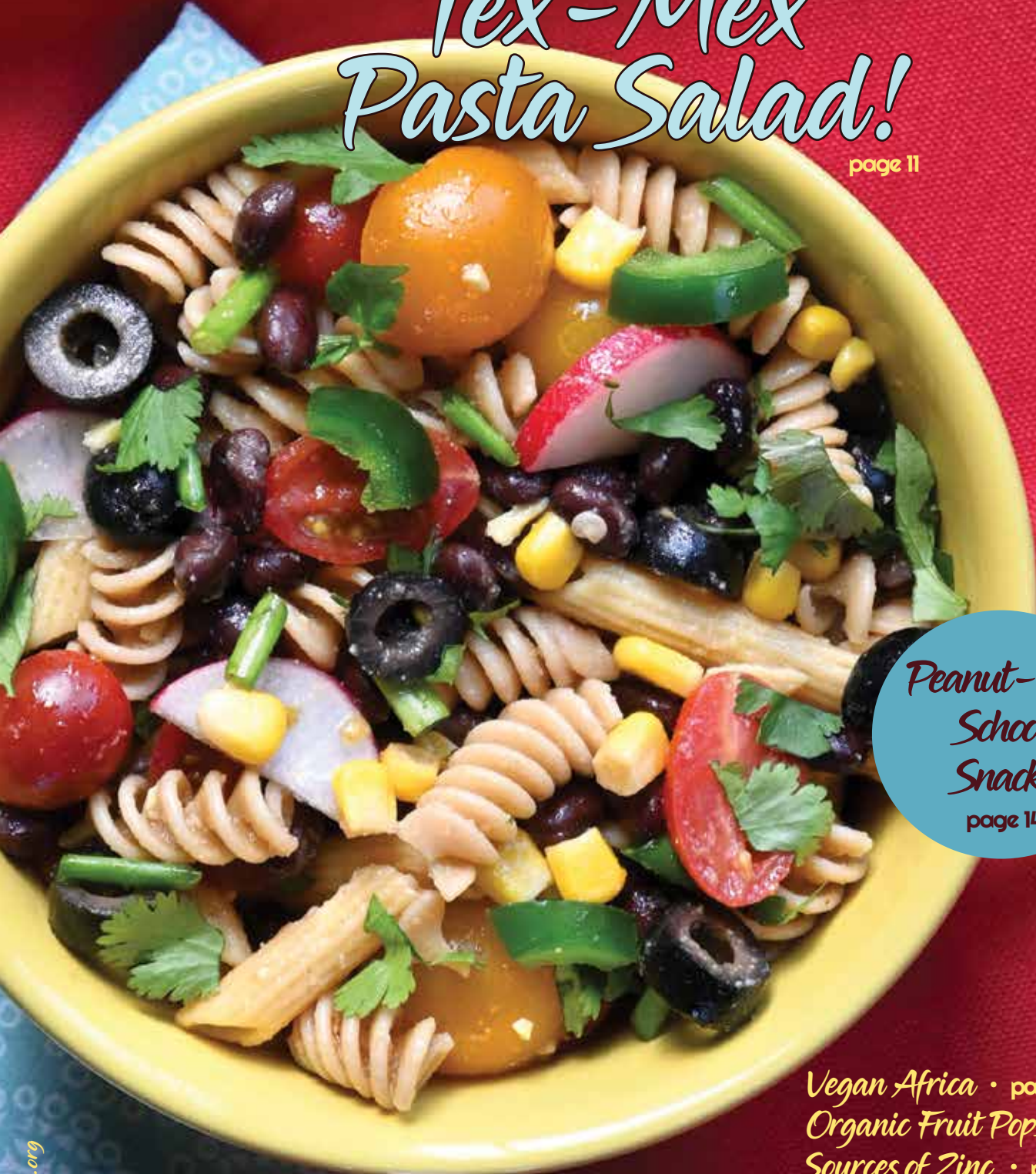


# Vegan Journal

Health, Ethics & Environment since 1982

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# Nutrition Hotline

## Diet and Skin Health

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



**QUESTION:** Does what I eat affect my skin? K.A., via email

**ANSWER:** Many factors, including genetics, smoking, sleep, exercise, overall health, and diet, can affect skin health. Environmental factors such as humidity and sun exposure also contribute to skin health. We know that outright nutrient deficiencies can lead to skin thickening, poor wound healing, and dermatitis. Much less is known about the effect of specific foods or diets on skin health in well-nourished people. Although there are only a limited number of studies looking at whole foods—as opposed to powders, extracts, or pills—there is preliminary evidence that food choices can have effects on skin dryness, redness, elasticity, and wrinkles among others.<sup>1</sup>

Wrinkling is one of the more commonly studied conditions. Diets higher in plant foods are associated with less wrinkling. For example, in women, higher intakes of green and yellow vegetables were associated with having fewer wrinkles.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, a lower intake of vitamin C, which is found in fruits and vegetables, was associated with dry skin and

wrinkling.<sup>1</sup> A high intake of vegetables, legumes, and olive oil was associated with less wrinkling on sun-exposed skin.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, high intakes of meat, refined grains, and snack foods was associated with more wrinkling in one study.<sup>4</sup> Another study found less wrinkling with lower intakes of butter and margarine, dairy products, and sweets.<sup>3</sup> Higher intakes of omega-3 fats from plant foods such as flaxseeds and walnuts were associated with a lower risk of severe sun damage to skin (wrinkling, loss of elasticity, brown spots).<sup>1</sup>

The benefits seen with plant foods may be due in part to their vitamin C and carotenoid content. Vitamin C plays a role in collagen synthesis. Collagen gives strength and elasticity to skin. Vitamin C and carotenoids have antioxidant functions and may offer some protection from oxidative stress due to sun exposure that can result in wrinkles and other skin damage. There are many benefits of diets that include generous amounts of plant foods. Healthier skin appears to be one of these benefits.

If you're interested in learning more about diet's role in acne, see issue 2, 2021, of the *Journal*.

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# Vegan Journal

(formerly *Vegetarian Journal*)

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*Vegan Journal* is one project of The Vegetarian Resource Group. We are a nonprofit that educates the public about veganism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, environment, ethics, and world hunger. To join VRG and receive *Vegan Journal* in the USA, send \$25 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or go to [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate). Additional donations support our outreach and research.



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# Note from the Coordinators



## So Many Reasons to Love Soup

**T**his past winter and spring, Debra was in the kitchen making endless pots of soup. Generally, soup is an economical meal, and there are so many varieties. Think Mushroom Barley Soup, Creamed Corn Soup, Vegetable Soup, Onion Soup, Lentil Soup, Hot and Sour Soup, Split Pea Soup. The list goes on forever. In this issue, be sure to try Hannah Kaminsky's Colombian Black Bean Soup on page 7. And if you like thick soups, why not try a dish of stew? Marie Kacouchi's *Vegan Africa* article (pages 16-20) offers recipes for Plantain and Eggplant Stew, Potato Stew with Olives, and *Githeri* (Kenyan Corn and Bean Stew).

Preparing soup can make a great activist activity. Back in the 1980s we helped organize a soup, salad, and bread event for The Vegetarian Society of DC. It was well attended! Additionally, we've donated vegan soup to those in need.

The wonderful aspect about a bowl of piping hot soup or stew is that you can easily improvise. Improvise, you ask? Yes, soups and stew are usually open to ingredient substitutions. Debra has been known to use chopped green beans or bok choy in a recipe calling for celery that simply was not sitting in her refrigerator. She's also swapped the called-for chopped canned tomatoes for chunky tomato sauce. Another recipe listing cannellini beans resulted in a switch to available garbanzo beans.

Oh, and soup can also be served during the summer months. Enjoy chilled soups incorporating fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, corn, watermelon, plums, and so many other items. You get the idea.

Vegans care about the environment. With creativity you have the opportunity to salvage food that might go bad before you have time to use it. For example, wilted greens can easily be shredded and thrown into that pot of soup. Root vegetables on their last leg can be chopped and added to a stew.

Be sure to check your refrigerator, especially if it's crammed with food. Hidden small portions of leftover cooked grains—such as brown rice, bulgur, farro, and millet—plus already cooked vegetables—including broccoli, butternut squash, cabbage, and cauliflower—can easily be incorporated into your next pot of soup. Add these wonderful items just before the soup you're making is done. The aim here is to simply heat up these extra pre-cooked goodies you're adding to the pot. This works especially well in soups that have lots of broth.

Finally, encourage children to help cook your next pot of delicious soup! Older kids can easily assist with the chopping and stirring. Remember, soup and stews tend to be healthful options that encourage creativity, warm the soul, and promote improvisation. What more can you ask for from a meal these days?

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler  
Coordinators of The Vegetarian Resource Group

## VRG's MEMORIAL and HONORARY GIFT PROGRAM

How often have you wanted to make a gift in honor of a loved one or friend but weren't sure which charities are vegan-friendly, pro-environmental, or pro-animal rights? Please remember The Vegetarian Resource Group. You can make a gift in memory of a loved one or as a living tribute to honor someone you care about on a special occasion, such as a wedding or birth. We'll send an acknowledgement to you and to the recipient(s) you choose. Your gift will support educational outreach programs and help promote veganism.

### Memorials & Honorary Gifts

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My name and address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to The Vegetarian Resource Group and mail to P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or donate at [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate)

Special thanks to these VRG volunteers for helping to acknowledge all the VRG Scholarship Contest entries we received: Jill Adler, Casey Brown, Amy Burger, Anayeli Camacho, Julie Covington, Clare Curtis, Tori Erickson, Natalie Evans, Julia Hart, Natasha Krishnaraj, Stephanie Kumar, Karen Lazarus, Amanda Lietman, Reed Mangels, Anna Markulis, Wendy McPherson, Whitney McVerry, Julie Neild, Patrick Reilly, Marcy Schweibinz, Tamir Stahler, Betsy Todd, Cheryl Van Beek, Kimberly Webster, and Patricia Welty.

## In Honor of The Vegetarian Resource Group's Co-Directors

February 6, 2023, marked 40 years that I have been a vegetarian. I had attended a tofu cooking/book-selling event organized by Charles and Debra in downtown Baltimore. Their efforts, and the great book I bought from them, *Laurel's Kitchen*, led to my giving up my carnivorous diet. I am forever grateful to those two fantastic people for the work they did then and all the 40 years since that they've poured their efforts into making this a better, healthier, kinder world!

*Janet S., via email*

## Veggie Options in Senior Independent or Assisted Living, Nursing Home, and Other Senior Facilities in the USA

Retirement communities keep coming up with clients; that is great that you put together this list! See: [vrg.org/seniors/senior\\_vegan.php](http://vrg.org/seniors/senior_vegan.php)

*Brenda M., via email*

## Journals Distributed at Alabama Health Fair

Greetings. Last week I received the box of goodies for the Selma, Alabama, health fair. Oh, joy! Thank you so much. The health fair was a great success. Only a few *Vegan Journals* remained, and participants were eager to collect the other information you sent. This will be a great help in transitioning to a plant-based diet. I am hopeful that it will become a part of a better, healthier lifestyle change. Thank you so much for the resources.

*Carrie G., via email*

## VRG Has Booth at Wilmington, NC VegFest

There was a great turn out! Had several very interesting conversations. A surprising number of elderly people that are now in retirement communities were there. They wanted to share information with other residents about adopting a vegan diet. Many are becoming plant-based as they become older.

*Whitney M., via email*

Letters to the Editors can be sent to: Vegan Journal, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. You may also e-mail letters to [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org) or send a message to us on Facebook: [facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup](https://facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup)

## Coming in the next issue...

### MEXICAN FUSION CUISINE

Plus: 2023 VRG Scholarship Winners, Pantry Mixes, Quick-and-Easy Party Ideas, and More!

# Modern Classics

by Hannah Kaminsky

## Black Beans

**T**hough they're just a blip on the legume radar as one of over 400 types of beans in the world, there's something special about the humble black bean. Hungry inhabitants of the Americas have turned to black beans as sustenance for over 7,000 years.

Black beans have traveled the world, making a splash in Indian curries and becoming fermented flavor bombs in Chinese stir-fries, but their heart remains throughout Latin America. Using time-honored flavors as inspiration breathes new life into this staple.

Stewed *frijoles* are the backbone of many meals, whether part of a complex platter or simply ladled over fluffy rice. They truly shine as a stand-alone Colombian Black Bean Soup (next page), thick and hearty, a complete bowl-in-one meal that essentially cooks itself. Tender plantains add subtle sweetness that balance out the black beans' earthy essence working in concert as a strong base to highlight bold spices throughout.

*Mole* is simply translated as "sauce" from *Nahuatl*, the language of the ancient Aztecs, but it's so much more than that. *Mole* comes in all colors of the rainbow and can be used in every course of a meal. In this case, *Mole Enchiladas* (page 8) feature a dark, smoldering cocoa sauce, blanketing simple vegetable enchiladas, baked together for a smoky, spicy finish. Every *mole* is a little bit different depending on the cook; don't be afraid to tweak seasonings to taste and really make it your own.

When you need chili to wow a crowd, Black Bean Chipotle Chili (page 9) is your secret recipe. Fiery without being outright alarming, each bite has a com-

forting, warm heat that slowly grows. Prep ahead for more hearty meals to come; it freezes and defrosts beautifully on demand.

Naturally creamy and tender, Loaded Spanish Sweet Potatoes (page 10) feature aromatic spices piled inside oven-crisped skins. Textured vegetable protein, TVP, is rehydrated in umami mushroom broth, which tastes exactly like sautéed chorizo, without the meat, of course. Get the whole family together to build their own boat, because they're as much fun to make as they are to eat!

Borrowing from the nuanced seasonings of native *Tejanos* and the rich tastes of western palates, Tex-Mex Pasta Salad (page 11) is a mashup of the new and old. Bright and tangy cilantro-lime vinaigrette coats noodles and fresh vegetables in an ode to Southwestern staples. Perfect for late-summer picnics, potlucks, or backyard barbecues, it's a guest welcomed with open arms (and mouths) at all celebrations.

To cook black beans from scratch, you have several options. I prefer to use my pressure cooker, since it's very fast, doesn't heat up the kitchen, and doesn't require any advance planning. Simply place the dried beans in the pressure cooker and cover with at least 5 inches of water. Seal the pot and cook over high pressure for 30 minutes. Let the pressure release naturally for 20 minutes, and drain the excess water.

For stovetop preparation, first soak the beans for at least 4-6 hours. Drain and add to a large stock pot with fresh water to cover. Simmer gently over low heat for 1-1½ hours. Drain and enjoy.

*Black beans have traveled the world, but their heart remains throughout Latin America. Time-honored flavors breathe new life into this ancient staple.*

# Colombian Black Bean Soup

(Serves 6)

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 plantain, peeled and diced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Two 15-ounce cans or 3 cups cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2-3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth, divided
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
- 1 avocado, sliced (optional)

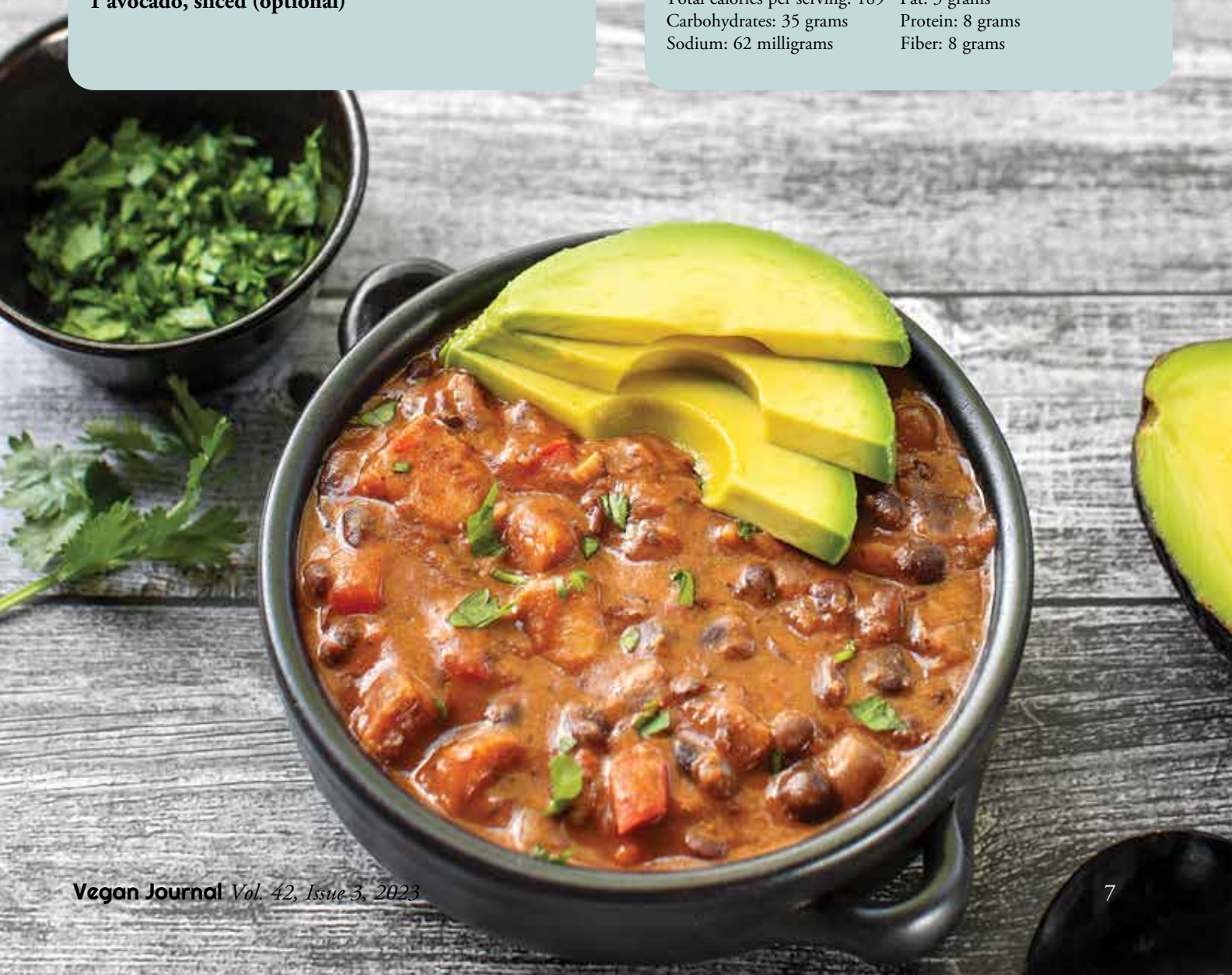
Set a medium stock pot over medium heat. Add oil and onion, sautéing for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Add garlic, bell peppers, and plantains, cooking another 5 minutes, until softened.

Sprinkle in paprika, cumin, and oregano, toasting for one minute to release the aromatic oils, before adding the black beans and 2 cups vegetable broth. Cover, bring to a boil, and reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer for 20-25 minutes, until the plantains are fork-tender but not falling apart. Season with pepper, to taste.

Transfer about a third of the mixture to your blender and purée until smooth. Return to the pot and cook for another 5 minutes. Thin with additional vegetable broth as needed to reach your desired thickness.

Ladle into bowls and top with cilantro and optional avocado. Enjoy hot.

Total calories per serving: 189    Fat: 3 grams  
Carbohydrates: 35 grams    Protein: 8 grams  
Sodium: 62 milligrams    Fiber: 8 grams



# Mole Enchiladas

(Serves 6)

1 pound zucchini, diced  
8 ounces cremini or button mushrooms, diced  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
½ teaspoon chili powder  
Salt and ground black pepper, to taste  
One 15-ounce can low-sodium tomato sauce  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
½ yellow onion, diced  
1 chipotle canned in adobo sauce plus 1 Tablespoon adobo sauce  
½ teaspoon cinnamon

1 Tablespoon lime juice  
¼ cup creamy almond butter  
⅓ cup natural cocoa powder  
12 soft corn tortillas  
One 14-ounce can or 1½ cups cooked black beans, rinsed and drained  
Vegan sour cream (optional)  
¼ cup fresh cilantro, minced

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat, toss the zucchini and mushrooms with oil, chili powder, and salt and pepper, to taste. Spread out evenly in a single layer without having the pieces overlap. Roast for 15-20 minutes, until fork tender. Set aside and lower the oven temperature to 350 degrees.

Meanwhile, prepare the *mole*. In a blender, purée tomato sauce, garlic, onions, chipotle and adobo sauce, cinnamon, lime juice, almond butter, and cocoa until smooth. Transfer to small saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 4 minutes and set aside.

Place the roasted vegetables in a large bowl and add the black beans, tossing gently to combine.

To assemble, lightly oil a 13- x 9-inch baking dish. Spread half of the *mole* sauce on bottom. Place about ¼ cup of filling in the center of each tortilla, roll, and place seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat until the filling and tortillas have all been used.

Spoon the remaining *mole* on top, cover the dish with aluminum foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 5 minutes more to make sure the edges get nice and crispy.

Drizzle with vegan sour cream if desired, top with cilantro, and enjoy right away.

*Cook's Note:* For a lower-fat solution to sour cream, simply blend silken tofu with a splash of lemon juice, apple cider vinegar, garlic powder, and salt to taste, until smooth. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Total calories per serving: 330    Fat: 11 grams  
Carbohydrates: 53 grams    Protein: 13 grams  
Sodium: 106 milligrams    Fiber: 12 grams





# Black Bean Chipotle Chili

(Serves 6)

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, deseeded and diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2-3 chipotles canned in adobo sauce, minced
- ¼ teaspoon salt, optional
- 2 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Two 14-ounce cans low-sodium fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- Three 14-ounce cans or 4½ cups cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth (or water)
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced

Set a medium stock pot over medium heat and add oil and onions. Sauté for 4-5 minutes, until onions have softened and are fragrant. Next, add bell peppers, jalapeños, and garlic. Cook for another 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently, until lightly browned.

Add chipotles into the pot, along with the salt, chili powder, oregano, tomatoes with the juices, black beans, broth, and vinegar. Stir well to combine.

Turn down the heat to low and let simmer gently for 40-60 minutes, allowing plenty of time for the flavors to meld. Stir every 10-15 minutes to make sure that nothing is sticking and burning on the bottom of the pot.

Ladle into bowls and top with scallions right before serving.

Total calories per serving: 264	Fat: 8 grams
Carbohydrates: 46 grams	Protein: 12 grams
Sodium: 258 milligrams	Fiber: 14 grams





## Loaded Spanish Sweet Potatoes

(Serves 4)

- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 cup textured vegetable protein (TVP) or textured soy protein (TSP) crumbles
- 2 cups low-sodium mushroom broth
- 2 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 3 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1½ teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander

- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- One 14-ounce can or 1½ cups cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
- Salt, to taste (optional)
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Leaving the skin on, thoroughly scrub sweet potatoes. Place on a baking sheet at least 1-2 inches apart and roast in the center of your oven for 50-60 minutes, until fork-tender.

Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan combine TVP or TSP with mushroom broth and apple cider vinegar. Set over medium-low heat and simmer 5-8 minutes until all the liquid has been absorbed.

Turn up the heat to medium and add tomatoes, nutritional yeast, and all the spices. Cook, stirring frequently, for 8-10 minutes, until the TVP or TSP is lightly browned and aromatic. Add the black beans and season with optional salt to taste.

When the potatoes are done, slice them in half lengthwise and scoop out the centers. Transfer the flesh to a bowl and roughly mash. Add the TVP or TSP mixture and fold to combine.

Divide the filling among the hollowed-out potatoes, mounding it up high. Top with scallions and serve hot.

*Cook's Note:* TVP and TSP are made from soybean flour and are sources of affordable meatless protein. They're sold dried as granules, crumbles, and larger chunks. You can find them in natural foods stores or online.

Total calories per serving: 339    Fat: 1 gram  
Carbohydrates: 58 grams    Protein: 25 grams  
Sodium: 130 milligrams    Fiber: 16 grams



## Tex-Mex Pasta Salad

(Serves 6)

**½ pound rotini, bow tie, or shell pasta  
(gluten-free if preferred)**

**1 jalapeño, deseeded and minced**

**1 pint (2 cups) cherry or grape tomatoes, halved**

**1 cup corn kernels, fresh, canned, or frozen  
and thawed**

**1 cup sliced radishes**

**One 14-ounce can or 1½ cups cooked black beans,  
rinsed and drained**

**¼ cup sliced black olives**

**2 scallions, thinly sliced**

**2 Tablespoons olive oil**

**2 Tablespoons lime juice**

**½ teaspoon ground cumin**

**½ teaspoon garlic powder**

**¼ cup fresh cilantro, roughly chopped**

**Salt, to taste (optional)**

Cook pasta according to package directions. Rinse under cold water, drain, and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine jalapeños, tomatoes, corn, radishes, black beans, olives, and scallions. Add the al dente pasta and toss gently.

In another bowl, whisk together oil, lime juice, cumin, garlic powder, cilantro, and optional salt. Drizzle evenly over the vegetables and noodles, tossing to coat.

Serve right away at room temperature, or cover and chill for 1-2 hours before serving to enjoy cold.

Total calories per serving: 284

Fat: 7 grams

Carbohydrates: 48 grams

Protein: 10 grams

Sodium: 67 milligrams

Fiber: 6 grams

**Photos by Hannah Kaminsky**

Hannah Kaminsky is a freelance recipe developer, food photographer, and cookbook author based in Austin, Texas.

She's the creator of BitterSweetBlog.com. *The Everyday Vegan Cheat Sheet* is her ninth cookbook, coming hot on the heels of *The Student Vegan Cookbook* and *Super Vegan Scoops!*, both published the year prior.



# SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

by Reed Mangels,  
PhD, RD, FADA

## A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

### Vegan Diet Has Lowest Impact on the Environment

Food-related procedures, including production, cultivation, processing, packaging, transportation, and distribution, are some ways how the foods we eat affect the environment, often in a big way. For example, the global food system accounts for 20-30% of total greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>1</sup> A recent study estimated the impact of five different dietary patterns on land use, water use, and greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup> The dietary patterns were the current U.S. diet, a “healthy” U.S. diet, a Mediterranean diet, a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, and a vegan diet. The estimated environmental impact of the dietary patterns was determined by using information from databases about the environmental effects of specific foods and by making assumptions about the foods that would be eaten by those following the dietary patterns.

In terms of land use, the vegan diet was found to use the least land; the current U.S. diet and the “healthy” U.S. diet used the most. The amount of land used solely for red meat production for each of the nonvegetarian diets was greater than the total land used to produce a vegan diet. Red meat, dairy milk, cheese, and grains were the food groups that made the largest contribution to land usage.

The vegan diet required the least amount of water; the “healthy” U.S. diet and the Mediterranean diet required the most. Red meat and dairy milk were the largest sources of water usage for nonvegan diets; nuts and seeds were responsible for 40% of water use for the vegan diet.

The three nonvegetarian diet patterns contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions. The vegan diet was associated with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions, with the lacto-ovo vegetarian pattern intermediate. There was a 4.75-fold difference in greenhouse gas emissions related to the Mediterranean diet compared to the vegan diet. Red meat alone in the current U.S. diet was responsible for 2.5 times more greenhouse gas emissions than the total vegan diet.

The study’s authors concluded, “The most impactful diet-related change that Americans can make towards a more sustainable diet is a shift towards a vegetarian or vegan diet and reducing the consumption of red meat and potentially dairy products.” They also pointed out that this shift could have a highly beneficial effect on individual health.

<sup>1</sup> Watts N, Amann M, Arnell N, et al. The 2020 report of *The Lancet Countdown* on health and climate change: responding to converging crises. *Lancet*. 2021;397(10269):129-170.

<sup>2</sup> Jennings R, Henderson AD, Phelps A, Janda KM, van den Berg AE. Five U.S. dietary patterns and their relationship to land use, water use, and greenhouse gas emissions: Implications for future food security. *Nutrients*. 2023;15:215.

### Diet and Depression

Many factors, including genetic, environmental, and psychological factors, play a role in depression. A focus of some recent research is the possible connection between dietary choices and depression. Two studies from Australia examined the association between the quality of vegetarian, vegan, and nonvegetarian diets and depressive symptoms. Both of these studies used online surveys to ask subjects about their food choices and about how often they experienced symptoms associated with depression, such as poor appetite, feelings of loneliness, and restless sleep. Both studies assigned dietary quality scores to participants’ reported dietary intakes. Higher scores meant that participants ate more fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and soy products and fewer processed foods. Lower scores meant that participants ate more fried food, salty and sugary snacks, and sugary drinks.

One study of self-identified vegans and vegetarians found that higher dietary quality scores were associated with a lower risk of having depressive symptoms.<sup>1</sup> A second study compared self-identified vegans,

vegetarians, and nonvegetarians.<sup>2</sup> The dietary quality score was highest in vegans, followed by vegetarians, and then nonvegetarians. Depressive symptoms were highest in the nonvegetarian group, followed by the vegetarian and vegan groups. In all groups, higher dietary quality scores were associated with a lower risk of having depressive symptoms.

Having depressive symptoms, such as poor appetite and sadness, could affect food choices. Thus, we can't say with any certainty that choosing a higher quality diet will reduce the risk of having symptoms associated with depression. More research is needed in this area.

<sup>1</sup> Lee MF, Eather R, Best T. Plant-based dietary quality and depressive symptoms in Australian vegans and vegetarians: a cross-sectional study. *BMJ Nutr Prev Health*. 2021;4:479-486.

<sup>2</sup> Walsh H, Lee M, Best T. The association between vegan, vegetarian, and omnivore diet quality and depressive symptoms in adults: A cross-sectional study. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023;20:3258.

## Healthier Vegetarian Diets Are Associated with a Reduced Risk of Major Cardiovascular Events

A recent study from the United Kingdom included more than 390,000 adults; almost 2% were lacto-ovo vegetarians and 98% ate red meat. Vegans and those who avoided red meat but ate fish and chicken were not included in the study. Diets of meat-eaters and vegetarians were classified as “healthier” or “less healthy” based on current U.K. guidelines. Study participants were followed for a median of slightly more than 10 years. During that time, participants had more than 40,000 major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and the development of heart disease.

Meat-eaters, whether their diet was classified as healthier or less healthy, ate fewer fruits and vegetables and had less dietary fiber than the vegetarians. Vegetarians with healthier diets ate less saturated fat and ate more fiber, fruits, and vegetables than did vegetarians whose diets were classified as less healthy. Vegetarians with healthier diets had a 16% lower risk of major cardiovascular events than did meat-eaters with less healthy diets; meat-eaters with healthier diets had a 5% lower risk of these events than meat-eaters with less healthy diets.

The difference in risk between vegetarians with less healthy diets and meat-eaters with less healthy diets was not statistically significant. These results suggest that there are benefits to choosing a healthier vegetarian diet compared to a less healthy vegetarian diet.

Petermann-Rocha F, Celis-Morales C, Pell JP, Ho FK. Do all vegetarians have a lower cardiovascular risk? A prospective study. *Clin Nutr*. 2023;42:269-276.

## Microalgae Supplementation in Vegan Diets

by Melinda Benz, RDN/VRG volunteer

Two omega-3 fatty acids, DHA and EPA, primarily found in seafood due to fish consuming microalgae, are associated with promoting brain, eye, and heart health. Plant-based omega-3 supplements derived from microalgae are available to provide DHA for vegans and others who do not eat seafood. Previous studies evaluating the effectiveness of algae-based DHA supplements in increasing DHA levels in humans have used high amounts of DHA. A recent study from Spain used relatively lower amounts of DHA. This randomized, double-blind trial analyzed 98 healthy adults. Subjects, all of whom consumed little or no DHA, were vegans, lacto-ovo vegetarians, and omnivores. The study aimed to determine if taking a 250 milligram per day algae-based DHA supplement (from the microalgae *Schizochytrium* sp) could effectively increase serum fatty acid DHA levels. Nearly half of the participants received one daily capsule of the DHA supplement for five weeks followed by an olive oil placebo for five weeks. The other half received placebo for five weeks followed by DHA for five weeks.

The study results showed that consuming the 250 milligram microalgae DHA supplement effectively increased DHA levels in all three diet groups. Vegans had the greatest increase in DHA levels, followed by lacto-ovo vegetarians, and then omnivores.

García-Maldonado E, Alcorta A, Zapatera B, Vaquero MP. Changes in fatty acid levels after consumption of a novel docosahexaenoic supplement from algae: a crossover randomized controlled trial in omnivorous, lacto-ovo vegetarians and vegans [published online ahead of print]. *Eur J Nutr*. 2022;1-15.

# No Peanuts, No Problem

## Ideas for School Snacks to Comply with School Policies

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

A reader contacted us asking for ideas for snacks that their vegan child can take to school for snack time. Snacks cannot be chips/popcorn, cannot have peanuts/tree nuts, and must be low-sugar.

We're happy to help with some ideas. All snacks listed appear to be nut-free, peanut-free, and vegan, and have five or less grams of added sugar per serving. Be sure to check product labels, since ingredients can change over time.

My preference is for snacks with minimal packaging or packaging that can be reused. I've included packaged snacks that some may want to use for convenience or to support the child who wants snacks that look like what other kids are bringing.

When brand names are listed below, they have been included to provide some examples of products. This is not an all-inclusive list of products.

- **Fruit** can be a refreshing snack. Make sure it's easy to eat—cut seedless grapes into small bunches, slice oranges, or make a fruit cup with melon chunks or berries. Choose seasonal fruits—in fall, apple slices sprinkled with lemon juice to keep them from browning, clementine sections in winter, strawberries in late spring. Even canned or jarred unsweetened fruit can work—try juice-packed pineapple chunks or unsweetened applesauce with a sprinkle of cinnamon.
- One of my kids' favorite snacks were home-grown **grape tomatoes**, which are even smaller than cherry tomatoes. Grape or cherry tomatoes can be sent with a dip like hummus for a savory snack. Other vegetables—carrot and celery sticks, jicama sticks, cucumber slices, red pepper strips—also make good hummus dippers. Since hummus comes in many flavors, this snack can be different each week.
- **Mini bagels** thinly spread with vegan

cream cheese. Check the vegan cream cheese ingredient list since many are nut-based. Tofutti and Violife both make nut-free products that have no added sugar.

- **Roast chickpeas** or other cooked or canned dried beans by mixing rinsed and well-drained beans with a little olive oil, nutritional yeast, and a dash of salt; spread them on a parchment-lined baking sheet in a single layer and bake at 400 degrees for 30 minutes or until crisp. You can add different spices. These can be eaten by the handful. If you'd prefer a commercial product, Seapoint Farms makes dry roasted edamame.
- Dry-roasted **pumpkin seeds** are another snack that can be eaten by the handful as long as your child is old enough that these aren't a choking hazard. Eden Foods has various size bags of pumpkin seeds, including a 1-ounce single-serve bag.
- Make a **cereal mix**, choosing low-sugar cold breakfast cereals and adding raisins or other unsweetened dried fruits. Have your kids help—maybe they'll even want to name their recipe.
- **Homemade muffins**, such as banana, blueberry, corn, carrot, oatmeal, for example. Avoid nuts, nut butters, or nut milks or very sugary recipes. Mini-muffin pans are nice for snack-sized muffins. Make a batch and freeze them so they're always handy when you need to pack a snack.
- **Seedy crackers or rice cakes** thinly spread with tahini or sunflower butter and made into a sandwich. Rice cakes can also be eaten plain. I've found Lundberg Family Farms Tamari with Seaweed Rice Cakes and Real Foods Multigrain Corn Thins to be especially



tasty. Lundberg Farms has mini-rice cakes and thin stackers—watch for added sugar in the sweet varieties.

- **Vegan jerky** There are many varieties of vegan jerky. (check label for nut ingredients or excess sugar). Savory Wild Jerky is made with mushrooms.
- Commercial low-sugar **fruit leather, fruit bars, or fruit wraps**—here are a couple of products that meet our criteria (vegan, nut/peanut-free, <5 grams of added sugar/serving):  
Bear Fruit Rolls  
Stretch Island Fruit Leather  
That's It Fruit Bar  
Trader Joe's Fruit Bar or Fruit Wraps
- **Baked tofu strips**, either homemade or commercial.
- Store-bought or homemade **bread-sticks with refried bean dip**. Amy's Kitchen makes lower-sodium refried beans.
- **Commercial snack bars** Here are a few brands we found that have vegan, nut-free, low-sugar versions (check the label since not all of these companies' products are nut-free and low-sugar):  
Blake's Seed-based Raspberry Snack Bar or Strawberry Go Raw Sprouted Bar

The Healthy Energy Bar—Lemon Poppyseed Rice Crispy Treat Bar

If you're looking for more ideas for homemade snacks, check out The VRG's website. Here are some articles with suggestions for easy-to-prepare snacks:

- *Party Snacks & Finger Foods*: [vrg.org/journal/vj2001jan/2001\\_jan\\_party\\_snacks.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2001jan/2001_jan_party_snacks.php) (shown in photo, left, Roasted Veggie Wraps with Mediterranean Bean Dip, from this article)
- *Quick Dips*: [vrg.org/journal/vj2005issue2/2005\\_issue2\\_tips.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2005issue2/2005_issue2_tips.php)
- *Quick and Easy Snacks*: [vrg.org/journal/vj2015issue2/2015\\_issue2\\_cooking\\_tips.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2015issue2/2015_issue2_cooking_tips.php)
- *Snack Attack*: [vrg.org/journal/vj2002issue3/2002\\_issue3\\_snack\\_attack.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2002issue3/2002_issue3_snack_attack.php)
- *Vegan Munchies*: [vrg.org/journal/vj2009issue4/2009\\_issue4\\_vegan\\_munchies.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2009issue4/2009_issue4_vegan_munchies.php)

Although not every suggestion in these articles is nut-free or low-sugar, many are. Replacing nut butters with sunflower seed butter or soy butter can result in nut-free versions of some recipes.

VRG's Parents and Kids Facebook Group is a way to get ideas for school snacks from others. Visit [facebook.com/groups/VRGparentsandkids](https://facebook.com/groups/VRGparentsandkids)

## NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

### IN THE NEWS

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, was interviewed for an article for *Contemporary Pediatrics* about nutritional benefits and/or drawbacks of veganism and vegetarianism in adolescents. The aim of this article will be to provide general practice pediatricians with guidance and nutritional information that they can share with their patients who may want to pursue either of these diets.

### VEGAN EDUCATION

VRG sent materials for health fairs, clinics, and restaurant tabling in Alabama, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. For example, a presenter at a health fair in Alabama asked for copies of our *Vegan My Plate* to distribute to attendees. VRG also gave 75 copies of our Spanish coloring books to three kindergarten classes in California. We were told it was a fun resource to use with their mostly bilingual students.

### VRG VEGAN DINNER IN DENVER, COLORADO

The Vegetarian Resource Group will be holding a networking dinner during the annual meeting of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics FNCE Meeting. It will be on Sunday, October 8, 2023 in Denver, Colorado. The public is invited. Please pre-register for this event. For details go to [vrg.org/blog/2023/05/13/vegan-networking-dinner-in-denver-colorado-sunday-october-8-2023-615-pm](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/05/13/vegan-networking-dinner-in-denver-colorado-sunday-october-8-2023-615-pm) or email [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org)

# Vegan Africa

by Marie Kacouchia



## Cumin-Spiced Orange and Chickpea Salad

(Serves 4)

Orange Salad is a Moroccan dessert I love. Fresh and subtly flavored with orange blossom water or cinnamon, I often serve the dish to guests in the summer. This recipe is a savory version, with similar lightness and flavor.

**3 oranges, peeled and sectioned**  
**Half a 15-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and patted dry**  
**1 red onion, thinly sliced**  
**3 flat-leaf parsley sprigs, chopped**  
**Juice of 1 lemon**  
**2 Tablespoons olive oil**  
**1 teaspoon cumin**  
**1 teaspoon paprika**  
**Salt and black pepper, to taste**

Combine the orange sections, chickpeas, red onions, and parsley in a large bowl.

To make the dressing, mix the lemon juice, oil, cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Add the dressing to the salad and toss before serving.

Total calories per serving: 186    Fat: 8 grams  
Carbohydrates: 26 grams    Protein: 4 grams  
Sodium: 40 milligrams    Fiber: 5 grams





## Plantain and Eggplant Stew

(Serves 4)

There's no shortage of stew recipes from one end of Africa to the other. I particularly love these all-in-one dishes because they're rich, comforting, and simple to make. You can make this stew your own by adding any vegetable you like or replacing the plantains with root vegetables like sweet potatoes or yams.

**2 Tablespoons olive oil**  
**1 yellow onion, minced**  
**1 large eggplant, diced**  
**1 Tablespoon garlic powder**  
**Pinch of ground cumin**  
**Pinch of paprika**  
**One 14.5-ounce can crushed tomatoes**  
**1 Tablespoon tomato paste**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**1 teaspoon organic sugar**  
**Salt and black pepper, to taste**  
**2 ripe, firm plantains, peeled and sliced**  
**1½ inches thick**

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottom pot over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until softened, about 8 minutes.

Add the eggplant, garlic powder, cumin, and paprika. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the eggplant is golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, bay leaf, and sugar. Season with salt and pepper, then let simmer until thickened, 30 minutes.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the plantain slices and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain water, then add the plantains to the stew and stir gently. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 5 minutes. Enjoy while hot.

Total calories per serving: 274    Fat: 8 grams  
Carbohydrates: 53 grams    Protein: 5 grams  
Sodium: 202 milligrams    Fiber: 10 grams



## Potato Stew with Olives

(Serves 4)

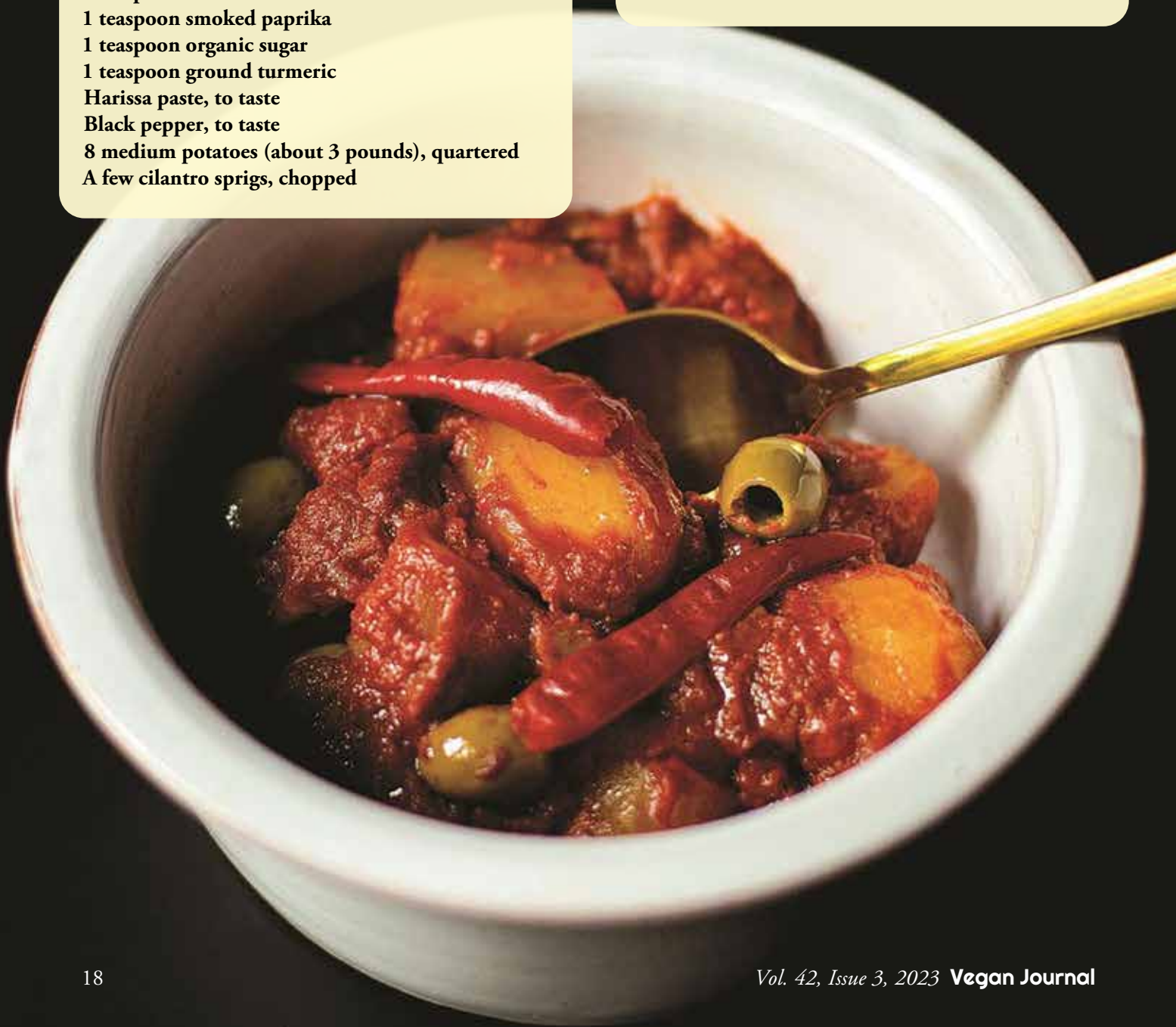
This Moroccan-influenced stew, inspired by a family recipe, is one of my favorites. Sometimes, I also like to add sun-dried tomatoes or roasted red peppers.

**2 Tablespoons olive oil**  
**1 large onion, minced**  
**One 14.5-ounce can no-salt crushed tomatoes**  
**½ cup green olives, pitted**  
**2 garlic cloves, minced**  
**1 teaspoon tomato paste**  
**1 teaspoon cumin**  
**1 teaspoon smoked paprika**  
**1 teaspoon organic sugar**  
**1 teaspoon ground turmeric**  
**Harissa paste, to taste**  
**Black pepper, to taste**  
**8 medium potatoes (about 3 pounds), quartered**  
**A few cilantro sprigs, chopped**

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium high heat. Add the onion and cook until lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Add the tomatoes, olives, garlic, tomato paste, cumin, paprika, sugar, turmeric, and harissa paste. Season with pepper, stir, and simmer over low heat until reduced slightly, 20 minutes.

Add the potatoes, along with a splash of water. Cover and simmer over low heat until the potatoes are cooked through, 30 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro before serving.

Total calories per serving: 409	Fat: 10 grams
Carbohydrates: 74 grams	Protein: 10 grams
Sodium: 308 milligrams	Fiber: 8 grams



## Chakalaka (South African Relish)

(Serves 4)

*Chakalaka* is a traditional South African dish. It's deliciously spiced, and typically served with white rice, and just as good eaten cold as it is warm.

**2 Tablespoon olive oil**  
**2 yellow onions, minced**  
**1 garlic clove, minced**  
**2 teaspoons curry powder**  
**1 teaspoon grated ginger**  
**1 teaspoon paprika or ¼ teaspoon cayenne**  
**1 teaspoon smoked paprika**  
**1 teaspoon dried thyme**  
**1 green bell pepper, chopped**  
**1 red bell pepper, chopped**  
**2 carrots, grated**  
**3 small tomatoes, chopped**  
**1 teaspoon tomato paste**

**Half a 15.5-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained**  
**Half a 15.5-ounce can white beans, rinsed and drained**

**Black pepper, to taste**

**½ bunch cilantro, chopped (optional)**

Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat, then add the onions and garlic. Cook until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the curry powder, ginger, paprika or cayenne, smoked paprika, and thyme. Add the green and red bell peppers, carrots, tomatoes, and tomato paste. Stir again and cover the pan. Simmer to thicken over low heat, 30 minutes.

Uncover the pan, add the chickpeas and white beans, and stir. Cover and simmer 5 minutes. Season with black pepper to taste, and top with cilantro just before serving.

Total calories per serving: 223

Fat: 8 grams

Carbohydrates: 31 grams

Protein: 8 grams

Sodium: 97 milligrams

Fiber: 8 grams



## Githeri (Kenyan Corn and Bean Stew)

(Serves 4)

*Githeri*, also called *muthere* or *mutheri*, is a traditional Kenyan dish. It can be eaten on its own or with boiled potatoes or *ugali*, which is a popular corn or millet porridge found in several East African countries.

**2 Tablespoons oil**

**1 onion, minced**

**1 garlic clove, minced**

**One and a half 15.5-ounce cans red beans, rinsed and drained**

**1 large tomato, chopped**

**1 cup canned corn, drained and rinsed (or fresh or thawed frozen corn kernels)**

**2 teaspoons paprika**

**½ teaspoon curry powder**

**¼ teaspoon white pepper**

**1½ cups water**

**2 scallions, minced**

**2 Tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves**

Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook until beginning to soften, about 3 minutes.

Add the beans, tomato, corn, paprika, curry, and pepper. Stir to combine. Add water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the scallions and cilantro leaves just before serving.

Total calories per serving: 245

Fat: 7 grams

Carbohydrates: 35 grams

Protein: 10 grams

Sodium: 110 milligrams

Fiber: 7 grams

Recipes from *Vegan Africa: Plant-Based Recipes from Ethiopia to Senegal* by Marie Kacouchia © Éditions La Plage, 2021. Translation ©The Experiment, LLC, 2022. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, The Experiment. Available everywhere books are sold. [theexperimentpublishing.com](http://theexperimentpublishing.com)

Marie Kacouchia is a Parisian who embraces the cultural references of her two homelands: France and the Ivory Coast. Passionate about cooking, her goal is to promote this singular culture of hers, between the culture of origin and that of the host country, through cuisine that is essentially mixed. Buy *Vegan Africa* here: [theexperimentpublishing.com/catalogs/fall-2022/vegan-africa](http://theexperimentpublishing.com/catalogs/fall-2022/vegan-africa)



# Review of Vegan Organic Frozen Fruit Pops and Bars

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

A frozen treat on a warm day is many people's idea of happiness. Happiness, perhaps, until you notice the ingredient list on the package includes artificial colors, dairy products, or other items you'd prefer to avoid. Recent years have seen more vegan frozen fruit pops and bars, many made with organic ingredients, and without artificial colors. We looked at the ingredients and nutritional make up of vegan organic frozen fruit pops and bars.

Most of the products that we include in this article have a relatively short list of ingredients, typically puréed fruit or fruit juice, sugar, and stabilizers like guar gum and xanthan gum. Stabilizers are used to reduce ice crystal formation. Some products replace sugar with fruit juice concentrate or omit sugar entirely. Some include natural colors and flavors.

Vegan frozen fruit bars and pops come in a variety of flavors ranging from the standards like strawberry, cherry, and grape to mango, blueberry-pomegranate, and watermelon.

Most frozen fruit bars and pops provide little in the way of nutrients; they are mainly sources of calories and carbohydrates. On the other hand, they have little fat and/or sodium. Most products have little or no saturated fat, the exception being products made with coconut. These products can have as much as 5 grams of saturated fat in a fruit bar or pop. A product with 4 or more grams of saturated fat is considered to be a high saturated-fat food.

Food labels are required to include information about how much sugar is added to a product as well as how much total sugar is in a food. Consider a serving of unsweetened applesauce, which would have no added sugar but would contain naturally occurring sugar from the apples used to make the applesauce. It is telling that some of the frozen bars and pops have all or almost all of their sugar content from added sugar. This means there is little fruit (or naturally occurring sugar) in these products; the products' calories are mostly from added sugar.

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, people older than two years should keep added sugar to less than 10% of total calories. For an adult consuming 2,000 calories a day, no more than 200 calories should come from added sugar. That means 50 grams or less of

added sugar per day. A child consuming 1,500 calories a day should eat no more than about 38 grams a day of added sugar. A frozen fruit bar with 15 grams of added sugar makes a significant contribution to a day's allowance for added sugar.

If you'd prefer to avoid or limit added sugar, look for products that have zero or low amounts of added sugar. You can also make your own fruit pops using blended fruit and adjusting the sweetness to taste.

Some of these products are labeled as gluten-free, and we have listed those below. Product composition changes, so check the ingredient label and contact the company if you have allergies or other dietary considerations.

## ***Products identified on package and/or website as gluten-free:***

- All Goodpops organic vegan freezer pops
- All Jonny Pops organic vegan pops and freezer pops
- All Whole Fruit organic vegan fruit bars and juice pops

*Thank you to Alexis Brown, VRG intern, and Mae Y. Seon, VRG volunteer, for collecting and checking information used in this article.*



# Vegan Frozen Organic Fruit Pops and Bars

Nutrient amounts are per bar or pop. Products contain little or no protein, sodium, or fiber.  
N/A indicates information that we were not able to determine.

Company	Product	Calories	Total Sugar (grams)	Added Sugar (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)
Annie's	Cheerful Cherry or Grapes Galore Organic Fruit Juice Pops	45	10	5	0
Goodpops	Cherry Limeade Organic Freezer Pops	25	6	0	0
Goodpops	Concord Grape Organic Freezer Pops	40	8	0	0
Goodpops	Fruit Punch Organic Freezer Pops	30	6	0	0
Jonny Pops	Cherry or Fruit Punch or Grape Organic Freezer Pops	25	5	5	0
Jonny Pops	Grape Organic Pop	50	11	10	0
Jonny Pops	Red White and Boom Cherry Lemonade Organic Pop	50	13	13	0
Jonny Pops	Watermelon Organic Pop	50	12	12	0
Natural Choice	Berry Pomegranate Organic Fruit Bar	60	14	N/A	0
Natural Choice	Mango Organic Fruit Bar	70	17	N/A	0
Natural Choice	Orange Organic Fruit Bar	60	14	N/A	0
Natural Choice	Raspberry Organic Fruit Bar	130	32	N/A	0
Natural Choice	Strawberry Organic Fruit Bar	70	16	N/A	0
Nature's Promise	Coconut Organic Frozen Fruit Bars	120	15	15	5
Nature's Promise	Strawberry Organic Frozen Fruit Bars	70	17	15	0
Solero	Coconut Organic Crushed Fruit Bars	110	16	16	4.5
Solero	Mango Organic Crushed Fruit Bars	80	20	16	0
Solero	Pina Colada Organic Crushed Fruit Bars	120	18	16	1.5
Solero	Strawberry Colada Organic Crushed Fruit Bar	100	18	17	1.5
Solero	Strawberry Organic Crushed Fruit Bar	80	20	20	0
Solero	Watermelon Organic Crushed Fruit Bars	70	18	16	0



Company	Product	Calories	Total Sugar (grams)	Added Sugar (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)
Whole Fruit	Black Cherry Organic Fruit Bar	70	16	15	0
Whole Fruit	Blueberry or Cherry Juice Pop	70	15	7	0
Whole Fruit	Blueberry Pomegranate Organic Fruit Bar	80	16	16	0
Whole Fruit	Grape Juice Pop	70	16	8	0
Whole Fruit	Mango Organic Fruit Bar	70	13	10	0
Whole Fruit	Strawberry Juice Pop	70	15	8	0
Whole Fruit	Strawberry Organic Fruit Bar	60	12	11	0



# Veggie Bits

## Fabulous Chickpeas



Fabalish is going to make you fall in love with chickpeas again. The line of sauces includes Mayo, Ranch, Queso, and Tzatziki, all with a fluffy base of aquafaba (that's chickpea cooking liquid). Testers loved them, noting the texture was thick and authentic, but Ranch came out as the “scrape the jar” favorite. In addition, Fabalish makes frozen Baked Falafel in Carrot and Zucchini varieties. They pair perfectly with the dips, make fantastic salads and wraps, or better yet, work well on a Mediterranean party plate. Gluten-free, nut-free, and organic. Buy at independent natural foods stores or online at [fabalish.com](http://fabalish.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*

## Ready-to-go Rice & Beans



Dinner will be ready in a minute, literally, with Jyoti Natural Foods' Your Ready-To-Eat line of beans and grains. The packets mix and match to create a well-seasoned meal that's on the table in a flash. The Cowboy Rice, with savory pigeon peas, onions, sweet peppers, and garlic, was a tester favorite. Quinoa and Lentils with tomatoes and bell peppers was another top pick and complete meal-on-the-go. The numerous options include Black Beans, Brown Basmati & Wild Rice, Hummus, Quinoa & Brown Rice, Refried Beans, Tri-color Quinoa, and Yellow Rice. These packets are great for office lunches, travel, and dorms, as you only need a microwave. Order online at [jyotifoods.com](http://jyotifoods.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*

## Growee Spreads

Slather on some... zucchini? This trio of spreads from Growee



Foods takes snacking on veggies to the next level. Try Curry Zucchini, Spiced Mango, and Three Pepper on crackers or carrot and celery sticks. Don't stop there, though. These dips are made of vegetables, seeds, and spices, all the real goods, and they liven up any meal. Each of the three took starring roles on sandwiches and wraps. The Three Pepper will add complexity to vegan taco night, and the Curry Zucchini (the tester favorite) transformed conventional tofu and broccoli into exotic fare. These spreads work in both hot and cold dishes and are a fantastic idea if you want to sneak more veg onto your plate. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and soy-free. Learn more at [groweefoods.com](http://groweefoods.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*

## Bronner Chocolate

Dr. Bronner's always brings ethics to their products, and the new line of All-One Chocolate bars



is no exception. Each tempting bar is made with fair-trade cocoa from organic farms and sweetened with coconut sugar. Testers raved about the filled chocolate bars. The counterpoint of chocolate and the nut butter middles was surprisingly sophisticated and elegant. Each had a luscious, creamy center surrounded by balanced, smooth dark chocolate. The flavors are 70% cocoa, with a sumptuous lineup of Cool Peppermint Cream, Crunchy Hazelnut Butter, Roasted Whole Hazelnuts, Salted Almond Butter, Salted Dark Chocolate, Salted Whole Almonds, and Smooth Coconut Praline. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and organic. Shop at [drbronner.com/pages/magic-all-one-chocolate](http://drbronner.com/pages/magic-all-one-chocolate)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



# Veggie Bits

## Vegan Eggs for All Occasions

Eggy classics are made easy with the mix line up from The Vegg. Varieties include Power Scramble, Uncaged Baking Mix, Vegan Egg Yolk, and Vegg French Toast Mix, and each has its own unique use. Bring a brunch favorite to the table with the French Toast Mix. It has the nostalgic custardy flavor and creates smooth texture during cooking. The Power Scramble is a speedy, hearty start to the day. Testers enjoyed dipping toast into the Vegan Egg Yolk, and the Uncaged Baking Mix made excellent muffins and chocolate chip cookies that held together and tasted old-fashioned. Gluten-free and kosher. Available online at [thevegg.com](http://thevegg.com) or from independent natural foods stores and some Walmarts.

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Cheezy Crackers

Snack time just got cheezier with Mary's Gone Cheeze crackers. If you're like our testers, you may find yourself "going back for just one more" of these crunchy snacks. Try Plant-Based Cheddar or Plant-Based Cheese & Herb; both are crispy and tasty all on their own with no need for dips to jazz things up. Yes, they might even remind you of a certain snack from your pre-vegan days, the kind that left you licking your fingers. They're like that, but better! These crackers make an ideal afternoon pick-me-up, are a fun addition to lunches, and would be welcome on any party platter. Following the Mary's website suggestion, these crackers also made a delectable breadcrumb topping for a baked vegan mac-and-cheese casserole. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and organic. Available nationwide at Sprouts and Whole Foods, or online at [marysgonecrackers.com](http://marysgonecrackers.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Wholly Veggie

The idea behind Wholly Veggie's frozen line is to make vegan food as fun to eat as your favorite snacks. It's a trick that works because Wholly Veggie was beloved by testers both for the old-school snack nostalgia, but also because the items were simple to make while remaining big on flavor. The appetizers were as light-hearted as college party food, but secretly packed with vegetables. The sometimes-rotating line of appetizers includes Buffalo Cauliflower Wings, Ranch Cauliflower Wings, Sweet Potato Popcorn, and Sweet & Spicy Broccoli Wings. They also have meals like Cheezy Cauliflower and Broccoli, Southwest Chili, and Thai Curry, with changing menus and specials. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and soy-free. Available nationwide at Sprouts, Target, Walmart, and independent grocers or online at [whollyveggie.com](http://whollyveggie.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Exotic Flavor in Simple Sauces

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*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



# Maya Vegan Foods

by Odette Olivares, MS

**M**any traditional cultures use plant foods to increase the variety of their meals. Mexican indigenous dishes, such as those that are a part of Maya cuisine, are an example. Although not traditionally vegan, Maya cuisine, includes many options for plant-based dishes and exemplifies the appetizing flavors of a vegan diet.

## Maya Culture and Traditions

The Maya civilization is one of the most important in Latin America because of its advancements in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, and medicine. From 1800 BCE to 1600 CE, Maya occupied the area of today's states of Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo, and Yucatán in Mexico and the countries of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.<sup>1</sup> Maya were the first civilization to use the concept of zero as a symbol of the beginning and end of a cycle. They created a complex and precise calendar based on the cycles of the moon, the sun, and other planets.<sup>2</sup> Their knowledge of astronomy contributed to the architecture of their pyramids and temples, which are rich in impressive visual



effects. In medicine, Maya explored the vast variety of plants in their region and used them to create numerous herbal remedies.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Maya living in a dangerous environment with threats from insects, other animals, and diseases, they learned to appreciate and respect nature and avoided its destruction as much as possible. Maya agricultural practices used rituals and ceremonies to honor deities and *aluxes*, guardian spirits of the forest who protected *milpas* (the cultivated fields).<sup>4</sup> Today, Maya communities continue to respect nature and to follow the principle of living in harmony with it.

## Maya Foods and Beverages

The diet of Maya is omnivorous, but plant foods are prominent. Similar to indigenous staple foods of Mexico and Latin America, the base of Maya cuisine is corn, nixtamalized corn masa (similar to cornmeal), Cucurbita squash or gourd, pepitas or squash seeds, beans, cacao, sweet potato, cassava, makal or taro, and hot peppers. Distinctive foods of the Maya area are chaya leaves, bitter orange, and *achiote* or *annatto*.

Maya use nixtamalization, the process of adding a 1% lime (calcium hydroxide) solution to corn, to make foods made with corn or cornmeal easier to digest and add flavor. Lime increases the calcium content of corn by approximately 20-fold, going from 8 milligrams of calcium in a cup of non-nixtamalized corn flour to around 157 milligrams in a cup of nixtamalized corn flour!<sup>5</sup> Niacin (vitamin B3), already present in corn, is made available to be absorbed by nixtamalization. When Spaniards imported corn to Europe, they did not bring the tradition of nixtamalization, which resulted in an increased risk of pellagra, a disease caused by niacin deficiency. Additionally, nixtamalization makes essential amino acids easier to absorb.<sup>6</sup>

Another cooking technique that the Maya developed is *piib*, a method of food preparation using an underground oven that slowly cooks food. The first step is to dig a hole, from a few inches to a yard deep in the sand or the soil, and place a palm leaf at the bottom.

Firewood and stones are the second layer, followed by food wrapped in banana leaves. The wood is ignited. When the stones get hot, everything is covered in a layer of soil. Even if this layer of soil extinguishes the fire, the stones will preserve heat.<sup>7</sup>

Every dish cooked with *píib* gets the *píib* word in its name. Corn *píib* is a special dish offered in a ceremony to *aluxes* so they will protect *milpas*. Corn is buried for three days and gets offered on an altar placed at *milpas*. After the prayers to *aluxes*, all the family can eat the corn *píib*.<sup>4</sup>

A fundamental ingredient of Maya cuisine is *chaya*, the leaves of a *chaya* tree, which is native to Tabasco and the Yucatán Peninsula. *Chaya* leaves are high in vitamins C and A, iron, calcium, and protein. They must be cooked for at least 15 minutes to inactivate a toxic substance similar to cyanide. Also known as spinach tree or Maya spinach, *chaya* trees grow wild in almost any humid, sunny, and warm place. *Chaya* leaves accompany corn and squash seeds in soups, *tamales*, or casseroles and are tasty.<sup>8</sup>

A touch of bitter orange, a citrus fruit, and its leaves add a typical taste to several Maya recipes. Bitter orange is used in beverages, *píibs*, legume casseroles, and other dishes.

*Achiote* is the prickly red seed derived from the *achiote* tree, a tree native to tropical regions from Mexico to Brazil. *Achiote* is known as *annatto*, from the *Kariña* language of indigenous people living in Venezuela and Brazil. Maya used it to paint murals in their pyramids and temples and to adorn their bodies for ritual ceremonies. It is still used as a food colorant. Today, it is also an ingredient in famous Yucatan foods, including *salbutes* (puffed, deep-fried corn tortilla with toppings) and red *recado* (a seasoning paste).<sup>9</sup>

The great news about pre-Hispanic Maya dishes is that you can find a wide variety that are entirely vegan! From beverages and soups to legume-based foods and candies, you can prepare indulgent vegan meals using traditional ingredients.

The eggs and lard used in traditional recipes are easy



to replace with vegan products. For example, *panuchos* is a popular Hispanic Maya recipe of Yucatan tradition made of black beans, onions, *epazote* or Mexican tea, bitter orange, habanero pepper, corn flour, and lard to fry the beans. Their shape resembles tostadas with a tortilla underneath and beans above it, but they are softer than tostadas. You can easily replace the lard with shortening, vegan butter, or coconut oil without missing out on *panuchos*' superb flavor.

Pre-Hispanic Maya used black beans as did many other indigenous groups in Mexico. Scarlet runner beans or *frijoles verdes* became distinctive to Maya cuisine. Most scarlet runner bean plants have red flowers and purplish mottled seeds. *Toc-sel de ib'es* is a nutritious, legume-based food made with scarlet runner beans, squash seeds, scallions, and *epazote*, an herb with a pungent flavor.<sup>4</sup>

Everyday beverages include *atoles*, warm and tasty drinks based on cooked corn flour. The simplest is corn flour *atole* (*masa atole*), prepared with only corn flour, sugar, and water. *Atole de pinole* adds cinnamon and aniseed to toasted corn flour and sugar.<sup>4</sup>

Another type of beverage is *pozol*. *Pozoles* contain corn and are drunk cold. *Pozole chorriado* is a delicious combination of corn, honey, and cacao.<sup>4</sup> You can replace honey with agave syrup or another vegan sweetener of your preference.

Although certain beverages are no longer widely used for religious purposes as they were in the past,<sup>10</sup> they can still be enjoyed. *Choko Sakán*, made of corn flour and bitter orange leaves, is an example of this kind of beverage. *Balché* was another sacred beverage. It was made of the bark of the *balché* tree, ground corn, honey (easily replaceable with agave syrup), and toasted cacao seeds. This beverage was put in 13 little pitchers and offered by a priest to *aluxes* in the *Janli Kol* celebration, a ceremony of thankfulness for the ripening of corn.<sup>4,10</sup> In contrast to some beliefs of contemporary societies, the number 13 was sacred for Maya.

Photos from Canva.com

## Changes Come to the Maya Civilization

Despite Maya greatness, around 1000 CE, the great fall happened. Political and cultural activities in big cities declined, governing dynasties fled, and the population diminished drastically. Recently it was discovered that this was a gradual process; however, its reasons are still unknown. Some hypotheses are overpopulation, agricultural crisis, disruption of the ecological equilibrium, hunger, and malnutrition, which might have worsened political conflicts. The few Maya who remained were conquered by other minor indigenous groups and later by the Spaniards. They showed incredible endurance to preserve their lands and culture, for example, in the armed uprisings of 1712 and 1867 in *Chiapas*, against the New Spain government.<sup>1, 3</sup>

Today they keep fighting to preserve their identities and traditions but in a different way. The survival of a repertory of Mayan words in the urban culture of *Merida*, *Yucatán*, and a cookbook written by the group of Maya women from the *Dzitbalché* community are examples of this resilience.<sup>4</sup>

Maya foods reveal the knowledge of a living culture that discovered goodness in nature and learned how fundamental it was not to forget to be grateful.

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Odette is a Mexican plant-based nutritionist and professor at Anáhuac University, Mexico. She is passionate about spreading the benefits of plant-based nutrition on human and planetary health, social justice, and ethics.



## BEQUESTS

The VRG depends on the generous contributions of our members and supporters to continue our educational projects. Though the world may not become vegan in our lifetimes, we realize that we are planning and working for future generations.

- Your will and life insurance policies enable you to protect your family and also to provide a way to give long-lasting support to causes in which you believe. Naming The Vegetarian Resource Group in your will or life insurance policy will enable us to increase our work for veganism.
- One suggested form of bequest is: *I give and bequeath to The Vegetarian Resource Group, Baltimore, Maryland, the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (or if stock, property, or insurance policy, please describe).*
- To be sure your wishes are carried out, please speak with your attorney specifically about writing the correct information in your will.

# Book Reviews

## Vegan Pasta Night

by Brianna Claxton

In this new book, Chef Claxton serves up vegan classic Italian pasta dishes with spectacular photos. Start by learning how to make fresh Semolina Pasta Dough in several flavors as well as Gnocchi. Next, move on to preparing a wide variety of sauces, including Alfredo, Bolognese, and Vodka Sauce.

You can learn how to make mozzarella, parmesan, ricotta, mascarpone, and other cheeses at home, but note that these recipes are not low in fat. Another chapter is devoted to vegan meat recipes like ground beef chicken cutlets, meatballs, chorizo, and more. Some of the pasta main dishes utilize the vegan cheeses and meats to make savory Lasagne Bolognese, Kale Alfredo with Chorizo and Farfalle, and Ricotta and Chicken Mezzalune with Marsala Cream Sauce.

Finally, a chapter on breads and spreads includes Rustic Italian Bread, Roasted Garlic Bread, and Bruschetta, and another chapter offers sides and staples such as Pasta e Ceci, Calamari, Caprese Salad, and Wild Mushroom and Sage Risotto.

*Vegan Pasta Night* (ISBN 978-0-7603-7293-7) is a 208-page hardcover book. It is published by Harvard Common Press and retails for \$26.99. Order this book online or at your local bookstore. *Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*



you should follow to make sure each dish comes out of the oven perfectly. Additionally, you'll find an extensive ingredient glossary.

The collection features one-pan dishes ranging from breakfast items, like Banana Sheet Pan Cakes, Spiralized Hash Browns, and Tofu Shakshuka, to desserts such as New York Crumb Cake, Indoor S'mores, and Thai Tea Sheet Cake. Between these chapters explore snacks and appetizers such as Cauliflower Tempura, Pretzel Focaccia, and Greens and Beans Crostini. The salad selection consists of recipes like Aloha Ramen Slaw and All-Kale Caesar. Make oven-friendly sides Corn Pudding, Nuthouse Stuffing, and Scalloped Summer Squash or tasty soups & stews such as French Onion, Minestrone Primavera, and Pumpkin Khichdi.

*The Everyday Vegan Cheat Sheet* (ISBN 978-1-5107-6865-9) is a 264-page book. It is published by Skyhorse Publishing and retails for \$29.99. Purchase this book online or at your favorite bookstore. *Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*

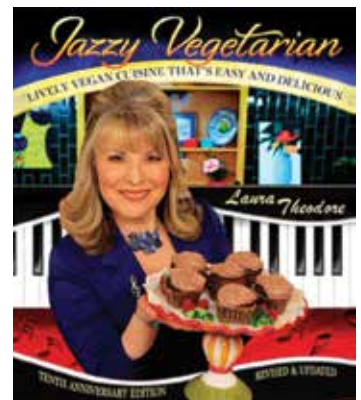
## Jazzy Vegetarian

by Laura Theodore

Author Laura Theodore is a celebrity chef on PBS and author of many vegan cookbooks. The tenth anniversary edition of *Jazzy Vegetarian* consists of 120 vegan recipes and 200 photos. You'll find a chapter devoted to the basics with respect to ingredients, and another chapter featuring helpful menu planning tips as well as 12 sample menus incorporating the author's recipes. For example, Farmers' Market Fresh Menu includes: Zucchini Fettuccine with Fresh Tomato Salsa; Arugula-and-Walnut Pesto Pasta; and Autumn Apple Crisp. A special touch is included with each suggested menu—a jazzy music pick suggested by Theodore to help set the mood for your special meal.

The recipes in this book vary from Laura's Jazzy Breakfast Cookies to Penne and Lettuce Soup to Vegan Pepperoni Pizza. Enjoy her take on Caramelized Balsamic Artichokes, Peanut Butter Fudge, and Summer Peaches and Lemon "Cream" Tart.

*Jazzy Vegetarian* (ISBN 978-0-9965-4753-6) is a 224-page book. It is distributed by Book Publishing Company and retails for \$26.95. *Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*

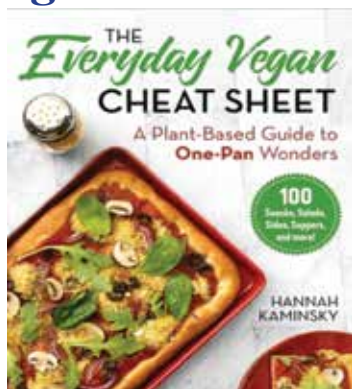


## The Everyday Vegan Cheat Sheet

by Hannah Kaminsky

Kaminsky has been writing cookbooks since she was a teenager. She creates the incredible photographs for her books and offers helpful tips throughout.

In the introduction you'll find a thorough description of the various types of sheet pans used to prepare the recipes. The author shares useful thoughts on methods



# The Vegetarian Resource Group Testimony Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Regarding Food Allergen Labeling Requirements: Guidance for Industry

We welcome the opportunity to comment on Questions and Answers Regarding Food Allergens, Including the Food Allergen Labeling Requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Edition 5): Guidance for Industry [Draft Guidance].

As a consumer organization, we prioritize providing clear, helpful label information that consumers can use to make an informed choice. We commend the FDA for their consideration of newer methods of food production and trends in food choices and for promoting the provision of clear information to consumers.

Specifically, we were pleased to see guidance specifying that products packaged in containers or in bulk to be used by food manufacturers that contain a major food allergen must comply with the allergen labeling requirements (B.2, B.3). This is important to help assure proper handling and clear labeling of the finished products. We were also pleased with the guidance for declaration of incidental additives in spice mixes which might be major food allergens (B.4). This guidance will also protect consumers. We also agree that an incidental additive that contains a major food allergen would have to be declared as a food source of the major food allergen (D.10).

Allergic reactions have been associated with the consumption of milk from other ruminants in addition to cows. In order to protect consumers, we are in favor of a revision of the FDA's interpretation of "milk" for this guidance (C.1). We propose a revised phrase "animal milk" or "animal-derived milk" which would distinguish cow, sheep, goat, buffalo and other ruminant species' milk from "plant milk" which would include milk derived from plant sources and that does not contain animal products. These revised phrases would be used in educational and informative materials about major food allergens. On food labels, the source of the animal milk should be identified similar to the way in which the specific species of fish or Crustacean shellfish or type of tree nut are identified.

Similarly, due to the potential risk of allergic reaction from various bird species, the definition of "egg" (C.2) should be revised to include eggs from other bird species in addition to chickens. On food labels, the

source of the egg should be identified similar to the way in which the specific species of fish or Crustacean shellfish or type of tree nut are identified.

We support the proposed guidance that proteins from major food allergens, produced in other sources through the use of genetic engineering are subject to the food allergen labeling requirements of the FD&C Act (B.14). This type of labeling will help to protect people with food allergies who may be misled by product labels containing statements such as "animal-free" or "vegan." We propose that food allergen information on these products should be in readable type or a readable background, not only in the ingredient listing but also along with any other declarations on the labels which may be confusing to the consumer related to the presence of the allergen. These could include terms such as "animal-free" or "vegan." We do not think that these terms ("animal-free" or "vegan") should be used on labels of foods that were produced through genetic engineering based on the DNA of animals (whether based on actual DNA, cell lines, or virtual DNA), due to concern for consumer confusion.

We are concerned with the response to question D.8 that does not clearly state what is needed in order to "ensure that the ingredient does not contain protein." In order to protect the consumer, products containing lactose or ghee should be required, without exception, to declare milk on the label. The possibility that a product may contain residual protein from milk is of great concern for those with food allergies.

We agree with the statement in response to question D.13 that good manufacturing practices should be used to protect against food allergen cross-contact. We are concerned that sometimes allergen advisory statements to warn consumers about potential allergen cross-contact are confusing to consumers. The allergen advisory statement may list an ingredient that does not appear in the product. It would be helpful to consumers to clarify that shared equipment or other cross-contact is the source of the allergen. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

# Thinking about Zinc

by Reed Mangels RD, PhD

**Z**inc is an essential mineral. We need to get it from food and/or supplements to stay healthy. Zinc has many roles in our bodies, including helping enzymes work properly, bolstering the immune system, helping to make DNA and proteins, promoting growth and development, helping wounds heal, and supporting the senses of taste and smell. Many whole plant foods supply us with zinc.

Zinc requirements for various age groups can be found here:  
[vrg.org/blog/2023/01/19/thinking-about-zinc](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/01/19/thinking-about-zinc)

## 10 Good Sources of Zinc for Vegans

1. **Vegetarian baked beans:** 2.5 milligrams of zinc in ½ cup
2. **Wheat germ:** 2.5 milligrams of zinc in 2 Tablespoons
3. **Pumpkin seeds:** 2.2 milligrams of zinc in 2 Tablespoons
4. **Tofu:** 2 milligrams of zinc in ½ cup of firm tofu
5. **Fortified vegan “meats”:** 0.8-1.4 milligrams of zinc in 1 ounce
6. **Chickpeas:** 1.4 milligrams of zinc in ½ cup
7. **Tabini:** 1.4 milligrams of zinc in 2 Tablespoons
8. **White beans:** 1.2 milligrams of zinc in ½ cup
9. **Lentils:** 1.1 milligrams of zinc in ½ cup
10. **Sesame seeds:** 1.1 milligrams of zinc in 2 Tablespoons

Zinc is often found in whole vegan foods along with substances called phytates that reduce zinc absorption. There are ways to help zinc be better absorbed.

## 7 Ways Vegans Can Promote Zinc Absorption

1. Choose more yeast-leavened and sourdough breads in place of breads leavened with baking powder like biscuits and muffins, and in place of unleavened items like crackers.

2. Sprout dried beans and grains/eat more sprouts.
3. Eat foods that supply zinc along with citrus fruits and other foods containing citric acid.
4. Eat foods that are good sources of zinc along with foods that contain organic acids such as sauerkraut and plant-based yogurt.
5. Soak dried beans and grains before cooking and discard the soaking water.
6. Choose fermented soy foods such as tempeh and miso.
7. Eat foods that supply zinc with foods that supply protein.

Find the recipe pictured below for Roasted Garlic and Herb Sauce served over tempeh on our blog:  
[vrg.org/blog/2023/02/22/roasted-garlic-and-herb-sauce](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/02/22/roasted-garlic-and-herb-sauce)



## Support VRG Outreach

# Cierra Peterlin

## My VRG Virtual Internship Creating a Vegan World



As a University of Maryland dietetic intern, I spent months rotating through different job settings. Sometimes the work sparks joy and sometimes it is simply a professional experience. My week with The Vegetarian

Resource Group was definitely the former! I have been living a vegan lifestyle for the past two years, so I was very excited when I learned that I would have the opportunity to spend a week with VRG.

At University of Maryland when I first got placed in my dietetic internship, I was invited to attend the previous class's virtual class day with VRG. From that first exposure I could tell that VRG was something amazing and wanted to learn more. I spent time browsing the VRG website and looking at articles and resources. Throughout my dietetic internship I had been referencing [vrg.org](http://vrg.org) for my own use, as well as referencing certain articles for projects and recommending them to people I interact with who are interested in vegetarian nutrition.

Getting the chance to rotate with VRG, even for a

quick week, was great. My main point of contact was Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, who was supportive and helpful. Before my rotation started, Reed and Charles Stahler sent me a list of projects and asked me to create a schedule. I knew it was going to be a good week because the projects aligned with my interest in food waste and the environment.

I got to exercise my writing and research skills. For my scientific review for a research article about food waste, I learned how to focus my writing for the general public. By the use of plain language, making study data relevant and reader-friendly, and with support and guidance from Reed, I was able to convey the findings of a study in more understandable terms. My other project was to write a blog about how to reduce food waste and create daily menus for low-waste vegan meals. It was the first time I had written something specifically geared toward vegans and vegetarians, which was really cool for me!

One challenge that I faced was figuring out how to conceptualize data on the large amount of food waste created in the United States. Again, with help from Reed, we translated large numbers into relevant and understandable context. Creating the menus for this blog, I was thrilled to be able to make them completely vegan. This project allowed me to make dishes that are in line with my values as well as in support of environmental and human health.

The VRG team was welcoming and supportive throughout the brief internship and made it known that warmth would extend beyond my week rotation. I hope to continue working to promote a veg lifestyle as a future professional and hope that my work with and connection to VRG isn't over!

For information about The Vegetarian Resource Group internships, see [vrg.org/student/index.php](http://vrg.org/student/index.php)



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# Vegan Cooking Tips

## Quick and Easy Ideas for

# Egg Replacers

by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

**E**ggs add moisture, texture, color, and taste to many foods; act as a binding agent and give a “rise” to baking products. There are many ingredients that provide the same properties without having to use animal products.

You can go with a ready-to-use vegan egg replacer, such as Just Eggs (mung bean, vegetable oil), Bob’s Red Mill Egg Replacer (potato and tapioca starch), or VeganEgg (soy and carrageenan).

If you have a bit more time, you might like to work with different, whole-food ingredients to create the taste and texture you prefer, as well as controlling what goes into menu items. Here are some egg replacers:

**Baking powder + oil:** A mixture of 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil, 2 Tablespoons warm water, and 2 teaspoons baking powder can replace one large egg. This works well in chocolate cake, cookies, or dense cakes, such as pound cakes.

**Baking soda+ vinegar (or lemon juice):** Mix 1 Tablespoon apple cider or white vinegar with 1 teaspoon baking soda to replace one egg in “fluffier” baking products, such as cakes.

**Chia seeds:** Combining 1 Tablespoon chia seeds with 3 Tablespoons of warm water creates a gel after about three minutes. This amount makes the equivalent of one large egg.

**Flaxseeds:** Combine 1 Tablespoon ground (not whole) flaxseeds with 3 Tablespoons warm water, whisk, and refrigerate for 10 minutes. This creates the equivalent of one large egg.

**Purées:** About ¼ cup (4 Tablespoons) applesauce, overripe bananas, cooked golden potatoes, canned peaches, pears, fresh, peeled plums, canned pumpkin, or cooked and thinned (with water or juice) sweet potatoes can be used to replace one egg. Consider the flavor or color of the product you select, as it could influence your finished brownies, cookies, loaves, or muffins. A chef’s secret is to use puréed prunes (you can stew and purée your own or use baby food) for chocolate bakery products.

**Soft silken tofu:** About ¼ cup soft, silken tofu (about 4 Tablespoons) can be used to replace one large egg. If you need more than that, you’ll want to use a different egg replacer, as tofu can make a product denser than desired. You could consider using vegetable oil (as below) to replace one egg, and tofu to replace a second egg. Tofu works better in denser baking products, such as biscuits, brownies, carrot cake, cookies, cornbread, muffins, or zucchini bread.

**Vegetable oil:** One-quarter cup, (4 Tablespoons), can be used to replace one large egg. If you need more than a one-egg equivalent, you would want to use a different egg replacer, as more than this can make the recipe pretty oily. Vegetable oil works best in denser baking products, such as biscuits, brownies, carrot cake, cookies, cornbread, muffins, or zucchini bread.



Photo by Rissa Miller  
Muffin recipe: [vrg.org/blog/2023/02/15/blueberry-oat-bran-muffins](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/02/15/blueberry-oat-bran-muffins)

## Katya Galbis, LD



Photo by Amalie Orrange

### INCREASING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION IN THE SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

by Nadely Requena

*de los Animales*, translated as *The Voice of the Animals*. While answering questions from callers about alternative diets, Galbis quickly realized people were genuinely interested in learning more. In 2011, she decided to create the Veggisima blog in hopes of breaking the language barrier of Spanish-speaking people and increasing their accessibility to nutritional information in Spanish.

“We’ve been taught how to do things... and we are so used to traditions. We are so accustomed to how (our parents) have done things, so changing those habits is very hard,” Galbis said.

She has found that, even though they might really want to change their diet, people come to her resources with fear. Often, individuals place barriers on themselves. Through her dietitian experience and while working with patients, Galbis learned the mind is stubborn.

After more than a decade of sharing recipes, food, experiences, lifestyle tips, and nutritional information on her website and social media platforms, Galbis’s advocacy has shined a more positive light on plant-based diets and living.

In the end, her purpose as a dietitian and blog creator, is to “help people (with their diets) instead of shaming them... for possibly not being educated.” Galbis is ready and willing to provide the support they need. She lives in Florida.

Blog: [veggisima.com](http://veggisima.com)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/katyagalbis](https://www.linkedin.com/in/katyagalbis)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Veggisima](https://www.facebook.com/Veggisima)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/veggisima](https://www.instagram.com/veggisima)

**K**atya Galbis is a vegan dietitian and creator of the Veggisima blog. She constantly works to educate Spanish-speaking people on plant-based diets. She has collaborated with multiple organizations, such as The Center for Nutrition Studies (CMS), The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), and The Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG), to create recipes, teach nutritional cooking classes, and do translation work to make nutritional information more accessible.

Growing up in Mexico, she vividly recalls there were always animals at her home, and she often assisted her father at his dog shelter. Galbis’ love for animals developed at a young age and only continued as she grew older, eventually inspiring her to pursue a bachelor’s degree in nutrition science in Mexico.

Her journey towards vegetarianism, and eventually veganism, began when her father invited her to speak on his radio station program called *Huellas, La Coz*

Nadely is a first generation Latina student and multimedia journalist at the University of Texas at Austin. Her writing currently focuses on US politics, with an emphasis on low-income communities and environment.





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### **VRG Sends in Testimony to the FDA Concerning the Use of Healthy on Food Labels**

See: [vrg.org/blog/2023/02/28/the-vegetarian-resource-group-testimony-to-fda-food-and-drug-administration-concerning-the-use-of-healthy-on-food-labels](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/02/28/the-vegetarian-resource-group-testimony-to-fda-food-and-drug-administration-concerning-the-use-of-healthy-on-food-labels)

### **VRG Sends in Testimony on the Proposed Revision in the WIC Food Package**

See: [vrg.org/blog/2023/03/06/the-vegetarian-resource-group-sent-in-testimony-on-the-proposed-revision-in-the-wic-food-package](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/03/06/the-vegetarian-resource-group-sent-in-testimony-on-the-proposed-revision-in-the-wic-food-package)

### **Dietary Supplement Label Database Lists Vegan Options**

National Institute of Health’s Office of Dietary Supplements Offers a Helpful Dietary Supplement Label Database. It includes current and historical label information from more than 150,000 products marketed in the United States, and it allows you to search by key word so you can look for products that have “vegan” on the label.

See: [vrg.org/blog/2023/02/13/nihs-office-of-dietary-supplements-offers-a-helpful-dietary-supplement-label-database](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/02/13/nihs-office-of-dietary-supplements-offers-a-helpful-dietary-supplement-label-database)



Photo of vegan ballet slippers from Cynthia King, available at [cynthiakingdance.com](http://cynthiakingdance.com)

### **VRG’s Shopper’s Guide to Leather Alternatives**

If you’re searching for vegan shoes, sandals, boots, handbags, wallets, belts, and more in the USA, Canada, Europe, or elsewhere, please check out [vrg.org/nutshell/leather.php](http://vrg.org/nutshell/leather.php)

We even provide links to companies that sell non-leather sports equipment, motorcycle gear, laptop cases, watch bands, guitar straps, toddler shoes, dance shoes, cowboy boots, hiking boots, snowboarding boots, tool belts, and many other items.

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