

The background of the image is a rustic wooden table. Two white plates are visible, each containing a chickpea salad with a red dressing and fresh green spinach leaves. The text is overlaid on a light green rounded rectangle in the upper left quadrant.

# EAT MORE PLANTS!

**20 SIMPLE PLANT-BASED DINNERS**  
in 30-minutes or less

by Leo Babauta & Jules Clancy

**For all the vegetable lovers!**

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# eat more plants

**By Leo Babauta**

Jules came to me recently with the idea to create a free vegan recipe book for Zen Habits, with some of her fantastic simple recipes. I did a double-take, and then immediately said, “Hell yes!”

I’m no idiot. Jules is a wonderful cookbook author, whose recipes tend to be right in line with my own philosophy: simple recipes based around whole foods, mostly (if not entirely) plants, without a lot of ingredients. Make it easy to prepare healthy meals in minutes. When you make it easy, it can become a habit.

But my deeper intention is to make it easier for people not only to eat healthy, but to eat plants. In my heart, I care passionately about reducing the suffering of animals, who are treated by our food system as if they were mere objects, without feelings or pain. These are living, breathing beings with brains, families, fear. If we can spare them and eat delicious plant recipes instead, I would love that!

Going vegan, even if only for a few days a week, can also reduce your impact on this planet. One of the biggest contributions to global warming that most people make each day is in eating meat and other animal products. Reducing our reliance on animal products would go a long way to being a part of a solution to our growing global warming crisis.

In addition to the ethical and environmental reasons to try a vegan diet, there’s also the impact on your health. While you can be healthy on different diets, eating more plants would vastly improve most people’s health. Even if you continue to eat meat and dairy, I think it’s a good idea to include as many vegetables as you can in your diet. These recipes can help you do that.

I’m not going to preach to you about veganism, but I will challenge you to try eating a plant-based diet for a week. See how you like it. Many people have taken up this challenge and changed their diet for the long-term — but I hope you just find some joy in eating delicious plant recipes!

Thank you to the wonderful Jules for creating this book, which contains mostly her recipes but also a few of my own recipes, and some articles from both of us on eating healthy and switching to a plant-based diet. I hope you enjoy.

# welcome!

My name is Jules. I'm a former Food Scientist turned Author and Vegetable Lover.

When it comes to deciding what to eat, one of my favourite guidelines comes from Michael Pollan:

## "Eat Food. Not too Much. Mostly Plants."

Even though I personally choose to eat animal products, I love vegetables and am always looking for ways to enjoy more plant based meals.

And help others do the same.

## I also love writing simple recipes.

Why?

Because I know that by keeping things simple, cooking need not take loads of energy or time.

Because I believe cooking for yourself (especially more plants) is one of the best things you can do for your own health and well being.

And that of the planet.

# the story of eat more plants

It all started 10 years ago when I stumbled across a blog called Zen Habits. It was my first encounter with the concept of minimalism.

I was instantly hooked.

As I started to simplify all areas of my life, it was only natural that the simplification rubbed off onto my approach to food.

At the time Leo offered an online class called 'A-List Blogging Bootcamps'. I had started a blog and was keen to grow it, so I signed up immediately.

Which was how I became friends with Leo.

Over the years we've kept in touch.

As much as I love Leo's writing on simplicity, habits and his plant-based diet, his recipes could be better (sorry Leo!).

This gave me the idea to collaborate on a free ebook with my favourite simple plant based recipes and Leo's words of wisdom to help you enjoy eating more vegetables.

# about the recipes

## I only write recipes with 6-ingredients or less.

One of my 'super powers' is being able to simplify recipes without sacrificing flavour or resorting to processed crap.

My recipes all include 'Variations & Substitutions' to suit your dietary requirements. So you can easily adapt to make them gluten-free, nut-free, low carb or whatever.

The substitutions are also helpful if you happen to be missing (or don't like) a specific ingredient.

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If you find this eCookbook useful, I'd really appreciate it if you **shared the love** and forwarded it to your family and friends or shared it on social media.

With love,  
Jules x  
thestonesoup.com

# how to use this ebook

THANK YOU for downloading your copy of this FREE eCookbook.

I'm really glad you're interested in eating more plants!

One weird thing you should know about me is that I have a personal rule that I must cook at least one recipe from each new cookbook within the first 2 weeks of owning it.

I find this helps me take the first step to actually using my cookbooks.

And I invite you to follow my rule with this free ebook.

**Challenge yourself to choose at least one recipe, buy the ingredients and cook it within the next two weeks.**

Who knows, you just might discover how delicious plant-based meals can be.  
- Jules

# making the most of this eCookbook

## 1. Use Adobe Reader

If you haven't got it already, you can download Adobe Reader for FREE. It makes it much easier to read PDFs like this. [Adobe Reader for your computer](#).  
[Adobe Reader for your mobile device](#).

## 2. Save it everywhere.

Work computer, home computer, smart phone and ipad. You will always have these recipes at your fingertips.

Perfect for last minute planning or for when you find yourself in the supermarket stuck for what to cook for dinner.

## 3. Find exactly what you want with the search.

Got mushrooms in the fridge? A quick search and you'll have all the mushroom recipes ready to choose from.

## 4. Jump straight to your chosen page with the hyperlinks or bookmarks.

My favourite feature. Just click on the links and be taken instantly to your chosen page.

The bookmarks make navigation super easy as well.

## 5. Make the most of the variations.

Each recipe has at least 4 suggestions for alternatives to suit different dietary requirements.

So if you think a recipe might not be exactly right for you, make sure you check out the variation suggestions.

The variations are also there to keep things interesting. If you enjoy a particular recipe, challenge yourself next time to try one of the different options.

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VEGETABLES



salted kale bowls with green tahini

# Salted Kale Bowls with Green Tahini

How good does salted kale sound?! OK it's a different vibe to salted caramel or salted chocolate but still. Salting the kale like this tones down the bitter flavours, making it taste super yum. And it tenderises the leaves so you don't need jaws of steel like a James Bond baddie to be able to eat it. Yay! Oh and this green tahini is something I was inspired to try when I had some leftover pesto that needed using up and it wasn't enough to really do much with. Love how the tahini adds a creamy, nutty complexity to the freshness of my favourite basil sauce. Soo soo good. I've used purple kale in the photo but of course any kale will work. Or if you prefer milder salad leaves, try some baby spinach!

enough for: 2

takes: 15 minutes

1 bunch kale

2 + 4 tablespoons lemon juice

4 tablespoons tahini

4 tablespoons pesto

2 handfuls roast hazelnuts or other protein

1. Tear kale leaves into bite sized pieces, leaving the stems for another use (or feeding your compost). Sprinkle with a generous pinch of fine salt and toss with 2 tablespoons lemon juice so all the leaves are coated. Stand for 5 minutes or up to an hour for the leaves to soften.

2. Meanwhile combine 4 tablespoons lemon juice with the tahini and pesto in a small bowl. Taste and season with salt and pepper and extra lemon if needed, remembering you've already salted the kale. If the dressing is too chunky, stir in a splash of water.

3. To serve, spread dressing on the base of a platter or two plates. Top with kale and nuts / protein.

## VARIATIONS

**different greens** – young collards, any kale or baby spinach. I've also made it with young chard (silverbeet) leaves from one of my playgroup friends gardens and was surprised how delicious it was.

**no tahini** – tahini is a sesame seed paste. Substitute almond butter, cashew butter, or sunflower seed butter (sun butter). Or try a smashed avocado.

**protein** – wonderful with cooked chicken (pick up a BBQ chook), eggs (poached or boiled), nuts or cooked pork sausages. Crumbled feta or goats cheese or shaved hard cheese like parmesan would also be lovely.

**no pesto / dairy-free** – puree a bunch of fresh leafy herbs (basil or parsley) with 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or use this [dairy-free pesto](#).

**nut-free** – use nut-free protein and the dairy-free option above.



# Salted Kale Bowls with Green Tahini...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more substantial / low carb** – add more protein like some cooked chicken!

**more substantial / carb lovers** – toss in some torn pita bread, sourdough chunks or cooked grains like quinoa, couscous or brown rice.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**kale** – will keep in the fridge in a plastic bag uncooked for at least 2 weeks. Or cooked it will keep for a month or so in the fridge. Can be frozen both cooked or raw.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**pesto** – commercial jars of pesto will keep for months in the pantry. Fresh pesto will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Cover with olive oil to prevent exposure to air and browning reactions.

**roast hazelnuts** – keep in the pantry.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

You can. Just salt the kale and make the dressing as per the recipe but keep them separately. Kale is good in the fridge for a few days but will get softer and softer. The dressing will keep in the fridge for up to a month and can be frozen. To serve allow dressing to come to room temp and continue as per recipe.



yogic green salad

# Yogic Green Salad

This salad was inspired by my Kundalini Yoga teacher, the lovely Odette. In preparation for a special early morning practice recently, Odette encouraged us to try a 24 hour 'green foods' detox. As she was describing a suggested meal of peas and avocado, all I could think was 'yum'. And here it is...

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*4 handfuls frozen or freshly podded peas*

*2 avocados*

*2 limes*

*2 handfuls pistachios (optional)*

1. Heat a little extra virgin olive oil in a small pan on a medium high heat. Add peas and stir fry for a few minutes until they're hot. If using frozen just pop them straight in the pan from the freezer.
2. Place warm peas in a bowl. Top with scoops of avocado and a splash of lime juice. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Serve with pistachios on top (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**different veg** – use chopped asparagus, green beans, broccoli or podded broad beans.

**more veg** – serve with a handful of baby spinach/salad leaves, mint, flat leaf parsley or basil leaves.

**carnivore** – it won't exactly be a yogic detox salad but feel free to fry some chopped bacon, sliced chorizo or chicken thigh fillets before cooking the peas.

**nut-free** – just skip the pistachios or serve with the herbs suggested above.

**more substantial / carb lovers** – again this will take it outside the realms of a 'yogic' salad but you could serve with crusty bread and butter or toss in some cooked quinoa, brown rice, rice noodles or other cooked grains.



# Yogic Green Salad...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**peas** – if using frozen, just keep them in the freezer; fresh peas can also be frozen.

**avocado** – use for another meal. Doesn't freeze well.

**lime** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**pistachios** – keep in the pantry.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Not ideal because the avocado will go brown. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen.

broccoli with hummus





# Broccoli with Hummus

This super simple broccoli is one of my all-time favourite ways to cook this unique vegetable. It's important to cover the broccoli when cooking so it chars as well as steams. If you don't have a lid, use a baking tray or even some foil.

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

2 heads broccoli

1 can chickpeas (400g/14oz)

3 tablespoons lemon juice

3 tablespoons tahini

2 small cloves garlic, peeled

1. Heat a large frying pan on a very high heat. Chop your broccoli into mini trees.
2. Add a few tablespoons olive oil to the pan and add broccoli immediately. Cover and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir broccoli, re-cover and cook for another 2 minutes or until it is cooked to your liking.
4. For hummus, combine chickpeas, tahini, garlic, lemon juice and 3 tablespoons canning liquid from the chickpeas in a food processor.
5. Puree until smooth. Taste & season.

## VARIATIONS

**sesame free** – make a chickpea dip by omitting the tahini. Or replace the tahini with almond or other nut butter.

**chickpea free** – if you're trying to minimise chickpeas in your diet because of their relatively high carb content, feel free to make a white bean hummus or even lentil hummus (I haven't tried this because I thought of it only now but I think it's going to be a winner)

**more substantial** – toss in a handful of roasted nuts, some cooked chickpeas or lentils, steamed brown rice, or serve with warm tortillas or flat bread for wrapping,

**more veg** – toss in some washed salad leaves, baby spinach, parsley or basil.

**lower carb** – use this [broccoli hummus](#) (instead of chickpea based hummus).



# Broccoli with Hummus...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**broccoli** – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for about 2 weeks or sometimes a little longer. Can be frozen (if you have time chop before freezing so it will defrost quickly in the pan).

**chickpeas** – keep it in the pantry.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**tahini** – I keep mine in the pantry but will keep longer in the fridge if open.

**garlic** – in a dark pantry will keep for months. I keep mine in a brown paper bag to avoid sprouting.



miso eggplant 'steaks'

# Miso Eggplant 'Steaks'

The secret to silky eggplant texture is to cook the 'steaks' with the lid on so they steam as well as brown. White miso is the most delicately flavoured of the miso pastes. If you can only find darker coloured miso, start with half the amount and add to taste.

enough for: 2

takes: 20 minutes

*1 large eggplant*

*2 tablespoons white miso paste*

*2 tablespoons rice or sherry or white wine vinegar*

*1 teaspoon sugar (optional)*

*1 bag baby spinach leaves, to serve*

1. Heat a large frying pan or skillet on a medium high heat. Slice eggplant into 4 thick steaks. Add oil to the pan and sear eggplant, covered for about 15 minutes all up. Turning every 5 minutes and keeping the pan covered. If the eggplant starts to burn, reduce the heat.

2. Meanwhile, combine miso, vinegar, sugar (if using) and 2 tablespoons olive oil in a small bowl. A few minutes before the eggplant is cooked, place a little of the dressing on each steak.

3. Serve steaks on a bed of baby spinach with extra miso dressing drizzled over.

## VARIATIONS

**soy-free / can't find miso paste / sugar-free** – skip the miso dressing and serve 'steaks' with a generous dollop of basil pesto.

**more substantial** – serve on a bed of cooked lentils, 'cauliflower rice' (finely grated raw cauliflower or steamed rice).

**herby** – if you can find some shiso leaves, sometimes called japanese mint, toss them in with the baby spinach. Otherwise a bunch of regular mint will do the trick.

**baked** – a longer but lower maintenance method is to roast the eggplant slices for about 30 minutes until very soft before finishing with the miso dressing.



# Miso Eggplant 'Steaks'...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more veg** – serve with a side of stir fried snow peas.

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – serve eggplant with [dairy-free pesto](#) instead of miso.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggplant (aubergine)** – will keep in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag for a few weeks. Can be frozen if needed. Or cooked eggplant should last a month or so.

**miso paste** – unopened paste can be kept in the pantry, once open needs to be refrigerated.

**rice or sherry or white wine vinegar / sugar** – keep in the pantry.

**baby spinach** – either freeze or wilt down in a pan with a little oil and then keep in the fridge for weeks.



broccoli pantry curry

# Broccoli Pantry Curry

I once asked a nutritionist friend of mine whether fresh or frozen veg were better nutritionally. I was surprised that she said unless the fresh veg are super-fresh, that frozen actually tend to have higher vitamin levels. A good reason not to feel guilty about the convenience of frozen veg as part of your repertoire of 'pantry meals'.

I used to think that you needed more than just 'curry powder' to make a curry. But as I've discovered time and time again, a good curry powder is a brilliant way to instantly transform a dish into a tasty curry. I like to make my own but most commercial curry powders will do the job. You might like to experiment with different brands to find your favourite.

enough for: 2

takes: 15 minutes

*1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)*

*1 bag frozen broccoli (500g / 1lb)*

*2-3 teaspoons curry powder*

1. Add coconut milk, frozen broccoli and curry powder to a medium saucepan.
2. Cover and place on a high heat. Bring to a boil then cook for about 5 minutes or until the broccoli is hot and cooked.
3. Taste and season generously. It will need quite a bit of salt. You may like to add a little more curry powder too.

## VARIATIONS

**fresh broccoli** – replace frozen with 2 heads broccoli chopped into little trees and stems finely sliced. Simmer a little longer for the broccoli to cook.

**different veg** – try cauliflower or peas.

**more substantial** – serve on a bed of steamed rice, cooked noodles or finely grated raw cauliflower (aka 'cauliflower rice').

**no curry powder?** – replace with 2-3 tablespoons Thai style curry paste.

**richer** – stir in 2-3 tablespoon peanut butter.

**more veg** – add cauliflower and onion.



# Broccoli Pantry Curry...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**none required!** – a true pantry meal.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks.





lebanese roast ratatouille with hummus

# Lebanese Roast Ratatouille with Hummus

I love love love roast veggies, especially eggplant and zucchini. Usually I keep the veg plain to make a ratatouille but was inspired the other day to try some Lebanese spicing and serve on a bed of hummus. Baharat is a Lebanese spice blend I use all the time. It's worth ordering some from a specialist spice merchant but if you don't have any you know I've got you covered in the variations below ☐

enough for: 2

takes: 40 minutes

2 medium eggplant

3 small zucchini

2 teaspoons baharat spice blend

4-6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

300g (9oz) [hummus](#)

salad greens, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Chop eggplant and zucchini into 1 inch chunks (2.5cm). Toss eggplant, zucchini, spices and oil in a roasting pan. Sprinkle with salt.
2. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring about half way. Or until eggplant and zucchini are well cooked and starting to brown.
3. Divide hummus between 2 plates. Top with roast veg and salad leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**no baharat** – use 1 teaspoon each ground cumin and coriander, 2 teaspoons smoked paprika will work as a spanish alternative. Or use another spice blend like berbere spice or the Moroccan spice blend 'Ras el Hanout'

**low carb / no hummus / Paleo** – use my [Quick Cauli Hummus](#) or replace with Tahini Yoghurt Sauce by mixing 150g (5oz) each tahini and natural yoghurt. Or just serve with a big dollop of [mayo](#) and some roast nuts instead.

**more substantial** – toss in a handful of roasted nuts, some cooked chickpeas or lentils, steamed brown rice, or serve with warm tortillas or flat bread for wrapping,



# Lebanese Roast Ratatouille with Hummus...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**carb-lovers** – serve with cooked rice, quinoa or couscous. Or serve with warm flat bread or tortillas.

**different veg** – onion, capsicum (bell peppers), mushrooms, tomato (fresh or canned), cauliflower, broccoli.

**herby** – use coriander (cilantro), mint or parsley instead of the salad leaves.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**eggplant** – will keep for a few weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. For longer, sliced and rub with oil and grill until soft and browned. Can be frozen if needed.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**baharat / coriander / cumin / extra virgin olive oil** – keep them in the pantry.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**salad leaves** – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.



Leo's best soup ever

# Leo's Best Soup Ever

This is my favorite hearty soup.

*\*various veggies, diced (you can use any kind that you like, but I usually throw in squash (butternut, though any kind is great), celery, carrots, corn, fresh spinach and broccoli — zucchini is another good choice)*

*\*1 yellow onion, diced*

*\*A couple cloves of garlic, diced*

*\*vegetable bouillon, 4 cubes*

*\*1 package pasta (any kind except the longer ones like spaghetti or linguini is good — I like the bow-tie pasta or shell pasta)*

*\*1 can each kidney beans and white beans*

*\*1 can stewed tomatoes*

*\*water*

*\*olive oil, a few tablespoons*

*\*salt and black pepper and Italian seasoning to taste*

Dice all the veggies and open the cans of beans (and corn if you're using canned corn); be sure not to skin the squash — just scoop out the seeds and dice it up.

Heat up the olive oil in a large pot and saute the onion and garlic.

Throw in all the veggies except the spinach; stir and heat up until veggies start to get a little soft. Season veggies with some salt, pepper and Italian seasoning. Throw in the beans, pasta, stewed tomatoes, and enough water so that the pot is nearly full (not all the way!); heat on high until boiling, then turn down to medium heat.

Mix vegetable bouillon with warm water in a cup until dissolved, and pour into soup; boil until pasta nearly cooked. Throw in the spinach a couple minutes before the soup is done; when the pasta is cooked, the soup is done. Be sure to season with more salt, pepper and Italian seasoning to taste — you know when it is seasoned right when you taste it and say, “Oh ... my ... God!”



# A Gradual Approach to Healthy Eating

By Leo Babauta

A lot of us have tried various diets over the years, with little success. I remember trying about half a dozen different diets when I was trying to lose weight, and none of them stuck for more than a few weeks.

Why is that? A few reasons:

1. You're trying to change a lot of things at once — from learning new recipes to strategies for social situations to what to eat when you go out to what you should do when you're craving a snack and much more. Making that many changes at once is a sure recipe for failure.

2. You're making huge changes all of a sudden. If you shift from unhealthy eating to healthy eating in one day, it will seem like a drastic change, and you won't be used to it at all. This is very difficult, and if you're struggling with something difficult, you're probably not going to last more than a few weeks.

3. You don't really like your life with this new diet. You like the idea of being leaner, but you don't like the diet, and you miss your old food. So it feels like a sacrifice, and you can only sacrifice for so long.

That's a lot of powerful forces working against you, and that's just the start. Having a spouse or friends who eat differently is difficult, and so is being surrounded by unhealthy food at home and work. What can we do?

## Why Gradual Change Works

If you understand the reasons that people fail at trying to create a healthy lifestyle, then you can see why gradual is better:

1. It's not overwhelming to start if you start small and only do one small change at a time.

2. With gradual change, you're not putting too much on your plate, as you are with a huge change, and so you're less likely to drop it as the weeks progress because you're too busy and have other things to focus on.

3. It's not an abrupt change, so it doesn't seem so difficult, and it quickly starts to feel normal. You're pushing out of your comfort zone, but not too much.

4. You never really feel like you're sacrificing.

Those are some good reasons. Let's do this.

## How to Transition to Amazingly Healthy

Before we start the gradual process, it's a good idea to know where we're going, generally. This won't be the exact place we end up, because things will change along the way — including your taste buds — but let's take a big picture look at what we're doing first.

A less helpful approach is to think of the perfectly healthy diet, and say that's what you need to do. For example, if for some reason we said you should only eat protein and vegetables, all day every day, then any deviation would feel like failure. And you might think that's not a very fun life, so you wouldn't be likely to stick to it.

# A Gradual Approach to Healthy Eating

Instead, try to imagine a life that includes healthy food that you'd really enjoy — but allows for other indulgences too. For some, that might mean you want a bagel and fruit for breakfast, then some healthier stuff for lunch and dinner (protein, veggies, quinoa or brown rice), maybe carrots and hummus for a snack, some green tea later in the afternoon, and finally a martini after dinner. That's not 100 percent healthy, but it's pretty great, and it's a picture you'd enjoy perhaps.

For others, you might want a sweet in the afternoon, or your tall latte in the morning, or French fries at dinner with friends a few times a week. Those are all allowable in a healthy lifestyle, if most of the other things you eat are healthy. You want a picture of a healthy life that seems enjoyable to you.

Next, pick one small healthy change and stick with it for a week. Get some accountability, put a reminder on your fridge, plan ahead of time, do whatever it takes to make that small healthy change happen. If you are successful, pick another small change the next week, and repeat that every week you were successful.

What kind of small healthy changes can you pick each week? The list can be endless, but here are some examples:

- \* Eat a vegetable at dinner every day.
- \* Eat a vegetable at lunch every day.
- \* Eat a fruit for an afternoon snack.
- \* Have a fruit with breakfast.
- \* Cut back one alcoholic drink at night.
- \* Don't eat after 8 p.m.
- \* Cut back on the sugar you add to your coffee to a minimal amount.
- \* Have a whole grain (quinoa, brown rice, etc.) with dinner instead of a white starch.
- \* Have hummus or raw nuts instead of those chips you eat for a snack.
- \* Have berries instead of the sweets you eat for a snack.
- \* Learn three new recipes this week (cook one night, then eat the leftovers the next, repeat).
- \* Eat at home most nights this week.
- \* Have yogurt with fruit or a tofu scramble with veggies for breakfast.

You get the picture. If you don't like these changes, come up with some of your own. If these seem too hard, make them easier.

One small change at a time means a dozen over a few months. That adds up to some amazing change over time, and it's change that's likely to last much longer.

CHICKPEAS





crispy broccolini & chickpeas with cashew 'ricotta'

# Crispy Broccolini & Chickpeas with Cashew 'Ricotta'

This was inspired by farmer and fellow veggie lover Andrea from the [Dishing Up the Dirt](#). I really love one tray dinners like this. Just pop everything in the oven, set your timer, make the sauce and you're good to go.

enough for: 2

takes: 30 minutes

1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained

2 bunches broccolini

200g (7oz) cashews

4 tablespoons lemon juice + extra to serve

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

handful pine nuts (optional)

1. Preheat your oven to 250C (480F). Place chickpeas and broccolini on a baking tray. Drizzle generously with oil and pop in the oven for 20-25 minutes.
2. While the chickpeas and broccolini are cooking, cover cashews with boiling water and stand for a few minutes.
3. Drain cashews and place in your food processor or blender. Add 1/2 cup water, lots of salt and 4 tablespoons lemon juice. Whizz until you have a smooth creamy sauce, scraping the sides down a few times. Give it at least 5 minutes. Gradually drizzle in 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil with the motor running. Taste and season with more salt and lemon, if needed.
4. When the broccolini stems are tender and the edges nice and crispy, sprinkle over pine nuts (if using) and pop back in the oven for a minute or so.
5. Serve your roast with cashew sauce on the side and a little extra lemon juice squeezed over.

## VARIATIONS

**family-friendly** – chop a sweet potato into chip pieces and roast in the oven for 10 minutes before adding the chickpeas and broccolini. Soak a handful of raisins in boiling water, drain and toss in at the end.

**more substantial / carb-lovers** – add chopped root veg to roast for 10 minutes before adding chickpeas and broccolini. Serve with warm pita or other flat bread.

**paleo / no-chickpeas** – replace with 1/2 head cauliflower chopped into florettes.

**different veg** – feel free to use any veg you like, just chop into bite sized pieces before roasting. Broccoli is great and if it's asparagus season where you live that would be my pick!



# Crispy Broccolini & Chickpeas with Cashew 'Ricotta' ...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**nut-free** – skip the cashew sauce and pinenuts and serve with hummus, goats cheese, labneh or home made mayo instead.

**short on time** – use real ricotta instead of making the cashew sauce.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chickpeas / cashews / olive oil / pine nuts** – keep them in the pantry.

**broccolini** – in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag.

**lemons** – in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag. Can be kept at room temp if you prefer but will last longer in the fridge.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just roast veg and chickpeas and make sauce as per the recipe but keep them separately. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm chickpeas and veg in a frying pan or the oven then serve with sauce on the side.



quick chickpea curry

# Quick Chickpea Curry

For years I used to think that a curry had to have more than just curry powder added to make it taste delicious. But then I realised the whole point of curry powder is that someone else has done the blending for you. All the complexity you need is in that little jar or tin. Such a great discovery!

enough for: 2 to 3

takes: 20 minutes

*2 red onions, sliced in half moons*

*3-4 teaspoons curry powder*

*1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)*

*400g (14oz) cooked chickpeas (or 2 cans)*

*1 bag baby spinach*

1. Heat a little olive oil in a medium saucepan on a medium heat. Add onions, cover and cook until the onion is soft but not browned. Stir every now and then. Will take about 10 minutes.
2. Add curry powder and cook for about 30 seconds then add the tomatoes and chickpeas. Simmer covered for 5-10 minutes or until everything is piping hot.
3. Taste and season with salt, pepper and extra curry powder if needed. Serve on a bed of baby spinach.

## VARIATIONS

**short on time** – skip the onion and serve with chopped chives instead.

**carb lovers** – serve with steamed rice or warm naan bread (or other flatbread).

**more veg** – add chopped veg with the tomatoes such as zucchini, red bell peppers (capsicum), eggplant or mushrooms. Simmer until all veg are cooked. Or serve with cauliflower 'rice' (grated raw cauliflower).

**extra flavour** – add some chopped ginger and garlic with the onion.



# Quick Chickpea Curry...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free) / low carb** – replace chickpeas with roast diced veg or chicken thigh fillets.

**creamy** – serve with yoghurt or coconut yoghurt or sour cream.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**curry powder / tomatoes** – keep them in the pantry.

**chickpeas** – uncooked keep them in the pantry, once cooked keep in the fridge, can be frozen.

**baby spinach** – either freeze or wilt down in a pan with a little oil and then keep in the fridge for weeks.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the spinach separately. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring back to a simmer.



spiced chickpeas with cauli mash

# Spiced Chickpeas with Cauli Mash

This is pure comfort food for me... A creamy rich mash with spicy chickpeas. But the best bit is there are 4 serves of vegetables! And you wouldn't know it to taste.

If you're not familiar with Baharat, don't worry, I've got alternative spices listed in the variations below.

enough for: 2

takes: 30 minutes

*1/2 medium cauliflower, chopped*

*4 tablespoons coconut oil*

*1 onion, chopped*

*1 teaspoon baharat (see variations for alternative spices)*

*1 can chickpeas (400g / 14oz), drained*

*4 tablespoons tomato paste*

1. Bring 2cm (1in) water to boil in a medium saucepan. Add cauli and simmer covered for 10-15 minutes or until cauli is really tender. (Be careful not to let it dry out and burn – add more water as needed).
2. Meanwhile, melt half the coconut oil in a small frying pan. Add onion and cook over a medium heat until soft but not browned, about 10 minutes.
3. When the onion is soft add the spice, chickpeas and tomato. Stir well and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat, taste and season with salt and pepper.
4. When the cauli is cooked, drain and return to the pan you cooked it in with the remaining coconut oil. Puree with a stick blender or mash well with a fork.
5. Serve spiced chickpeas on a bed of cauli mash.

## VARIATIONS

**different spice / no baharat** – baharat is a lebanese blend of 7 spices and a favourite of mine. The best substitute is to use equal parts ground cumin, ground coriander and smoked paprika. Or try curry powder or garam masala for a more Indian vibe. I also like to use the Moroccan spice blend, ras el hanout

**more veg** – add a chopped carrot and celery stick to the onion. Serve with loads of fresh herbs such as mint, coriander (cilantro) or parsley. Add a handful of frozen peas with the chickpeas. Serve everything on a bed of baby spinach.

**different legumes** – replace chickpeas with white beans, black beans or cooked lentils (you need about 250g / 9oz cooked legumes).





# Spiced Chickpeas with Cauli Mash...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**extra protein** – add a handful of cashews to simmer with the cauli.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with pita bread or mashed potatoes.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**cauliflower** – will keep for weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge. Can be frozen but the texture isn't as good when defrosted.

**coconut oil** – keeps in the pantry for months.

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**baharat / chickpeas / tomato paste** – keep them in the pantry.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the chickpeas and mash separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen.

# Ingredient Substitutes for Dairy

By Jules Clancy

When Fergal was first born, like most new mothers I was super vigilant in observing his every move. So when I noticed he was having a bit of reflux, I did some research.

One suggested solution was to try eliminating dairy from the mothers diet.

So I decided to have 'dairy-free week'.

While I love cheese way too much to ever voluntarily avoid dairy long term, it wasn't too difficult just for the week. It didn't really seem to make a difference to little Fergal.

But on the upside I made some great discoveries...

## 12 Clever Ideas for Eating Dairy-free

### 1. Grated nuts as 'Parmesan'

Finely grating Brazil nuts with a microplane has been my 'go-to' dairy-free option for ages.

While it looks the part, the flavour isn't as good as real parmesan.

But recently I've discovered an alternative. See my [Brazil Nut Parmesan recipe!](#)

### 2. Whipped Coconut Cream

Desserts are easily the most difficult area to go dairy free. My favourite whipped cream alternative is to chill a can of coconut cream (the higher the fat content the better) then spoon the solid cream into a bowl and leave any watery liquid in the can. Whisk until thick just like regular whipping cream.

### 3. Roasted pine nuts instead of goats cheese

Where you have a cheese being used as a flavour highlight, for example in a salad of roast beets and goats cheese, roasted pine nuts or other nuts can work as a replacement by providing richness and visual interest.

### 4. Cashew 'Sour Cream'

You need a super high-powered blender for this to work. Soak cashews in water for a few hours, then drain and keep the soaking water.

Whizz cashews in your blender adding in a little water as you go. Add lemon juice until you're happy with the taste and keep adding water until you're happy with the consistency.

You can use a food processor but it won't end up as creamy. Or see this [cashew sauce recipe](#).

### 5. Cashew 'cream cheese' or Macadamia 'ricotta'

See the [Cashew Ricotta](#) recipe over here. Or see my [Macadamia 'Ricotta'](#)

### 6. Coconut Yoghurt

See the [recipe over here](#).

### 7. Nut milks

Home made almond milk is easy and really delicious. But it's a bit too time consuming for me on an everyday basis.

There are some pretty tasty almond milks on the market. Some are very sweet though so you might need to try a few brands. Skip any sweetened with agave as this is almost pure fructose ( and if you're wondering why this is a bad thing [see here](#))

# Ingredient Substitutes for Dairy

## 8. Nut butters in sauces

I recently made a butter chicken (aka chicken tikka masala). The recipe called for cashew butter to finish the sauce. It was amazing the difference the cashew butter made to the curry, adding lovely nutty complexity. So I'm planning on experimenting with using other nut butters in sauces. Think sate and beyond.

My supermarket stocks cashew, peanut, and almond butters in the health food section. All are worth playing with.

## 9. Coconut oil

It's hard to go past real butter in baked goods. The next best option is coconut oil. But these make everything taste coconutty so be warned!

## 10. Vegetable or nut oils in baking

When a coconutty flavour isn't an option just sub in a neutral flavoured oil like refined coconut oil or refined olive oil.

If the recipe instructs you to cream butter and sugar, the oil won't cream up and trap as much air as butter would. So add a little extra baking powder to make up for it. 1/2 teaspoon should do in most cases.

## 11. Clarified butter or ghee

Most dairy dietary problems are a reaction to the sugars or proteins in milk products. Clarified butter or ghee has had these removed so can be fine for most allergy situations. To make your own just melt butter in a saucepan. Skim off and remove any white foam from the top. Keep the lovely buttery oil in the middle and discard the white solids from the bottom.

This also makes the ghee or butter oil more stable so great for cooking at higher temps.

## 12. Coconut sorbet

My go to ice cream replacement. When I used to have an ice cream maker I would just churn a can of coconut cream with a little icing sugar for sweetness. However these days my favourite [Coconut Sorbet](#) doesn't require an ice cream machine or added sugar. Win win!

## My Favourite Dairy-Free Ingredients

- \* Nuts & Nut Butters
- \* Avocado
- \* Nutritional Yeast (gives cheese-like flavours)
- \* Tahini (sesame seed paste)
- \* Coconut Cream / Coconut Oil / Coconut Yoghurt
- \* Dark Chocolate

# Plant Based Ingredient Substitutes

## CHICKEN/PORK

Chicken / Pork = cooked chickpeas, cooked white beans (cannellini / butter beans), tofu and tempeh.

## BACON

Bacon = sun dried tomatoes, grilled peppers, smoked tofu, smoked almonds, smoked paprika.

## CHORIZO

Chorizo = sun dried tomatoes, grilled peppers, smoked tofu, smoked almonds, smoked paprika, cooked chickpeas.

## GROUND (MINCED) MEAT

Ground (Minced) Meat = cooked lentils.  
Meatballs = [lentil balls](#).

## BURGER PATTIES

Burger patties = roast mushrooms, [veggie burgers](#), [chickpea burgers](#).

## STEAK

Steak = [mushroom steaks](#) or [eggplant steaks](#).

## CHEESE

Cheese = nuts, nut sauces or nut butters.

## AVOCADO

Avocado. See the dairy-free section for more ideas.

## MILK

Milk = nut milks, coconut milk, hemp milk.

## BUTTER

Butter = coconut oil, olive oil.

## EGGS


Eggs = beans or lentils, nuts, seeds, in baking apple puree or ground flax seeds.

## ICE CREAM

Ice Cream = [coconut sorbet](#) or other sorbet.

## WHIPPING CREAM

Whipped Cream = whipped coconut cream.



LENTILS



red lentils with tomato & spinach

# Red Lentils with Tomato & Spinach

I wasn't a big fan of red lentils because I found they often ended up mushy. Then I discovered the secret was to only cook them for a short while so they kept their shape. Win win really. This is a great thing to make when you've been over-indulging and are in need of something hearty but, with a healthy feel to it. Or if you're in the mood to dabble in a little veganism.

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*2 cloves garlic, peeled & finely sliced*

*150g (5oz) red lentils*

*3 tablespoons tomato paste*

*1 box frozen spinach (approx 250g / 9oz) OR 1 bag baby spinach leaves*

*1 handful almonds, optional*

1. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan or skillet.
2. Cook garlic over a high heat for about 30 seconds, or until starting to brown.
3. Add lentils, frozen spinach (if using), tomato paste and 1 1/2 cups water. Simmer for about 8 minutes or until lentils are just cooked, but still al dente.
4. Add almonds and if using baby spinach add it now. Stir until the spinach is just wilted.
5. Taste, season and serve.

## VARIATIONS

**nut free** – either remove the nuts OR replace with a handful of toasted bread crumbs just sprinkled over at the end.

**different lentils** – any dried lentil can be used here, you'll just need to increase the cooking time, some may take 1/2 hour or longer. And also be prepared to add more water if needed.

**different legumes** – cooked or canned beans or chickpeas can be used in place of the lentils. Just skip the water if using cooked legumes.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – increase the lentils and water. Or serve with cooked couscous or quinoa.



# Red Lentils with Tomato & Spinach...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more veg** – soften an onion first.

**paleo (gluten, grain + dairy-free)** – replace lentils with ground (minced) meat. Brown in the pan with the garlic before adding tomato and spinach. You won't need to add water.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**garlic** – keeps in the pantry in a brown paper bag.

**red lentils / tomato paste / almonds** – pantry.

**frozen spinach** – freezer.

**baby spinach leaves** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.





spiced lentils with hummus

# Spiced Lentils with Hummus

This dish was inspired by one of my all time favourite quick dinners, spiced beef with hummus. To be honest I'm just as happy with this lentil version as I am with the carnivore original. If you don't have any baharat, a Lebanese spice blend, see the variations for alternatives.

enough for: 2

takes: 30 minutes

200g (7oz) dried puy (or French-style green) lentils

1 onion, chopped

2 teaspoons baharat

8 tablespoons hummus

1 bag baby spinach, to serve

1. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil. Add lentils and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat a little oil on a medium heat in a frying pan. Cook onion for 5-10 minutes or until soft.
3. When the lentils are cooked, drain and add lentils and spice to the onions. Cook for another few minutes until everything is warm. Taste. Season.
3. Serve spiced lentils on a bed of hummus with baby spinach on top.

## VARIATIONS

**short on time** – skip the onion and use canned drained lentils.

**no baharat** – use 2 teaspoons ras el hanout or just substitute in 1 teaspoon each ground cumin and ground coriander.

**hot!** – a little fresh or dried chilli added with the onion will sort you out.

**home made hummus** – whizz a drained can of chickpeas with a clove of garlic and 3 tablespoons each tahini, lemon juice and water. Season well with salt.

**different greens** – any salad leaves can be used or flat leaf parsley, mint or basil. You could also serve with cooked greens such as kale or spinach.



# Spiced Lentils with Hummus...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more veg** – add carrot and celery with the onions. Top with chopped cherry tomatoes. Cooked mushrooms would also be nice.

**more substantial** – serve with pita bread or other flat bread (tortillas are great too).

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – lentils = ground beef. Broccoli hummus.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**onion / lentils / baharat** – keep in the pantry.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**baby spinach** – either freeze or wilt down in a pan with a little oil and then keep in the fridge for weeks.



creamy coconut lentils

# Creamy Coconut Lentils

Red lentils are one of my favourite pantry staples because they're cheap, packed with protein, are really quick to cook and taste super delicious. This dish is 'comfort central' in a similar way to a good risotto. I also think that coconut milk is an underutilized ingredient apart from Asian cooking. This recipe really showcases how versatile coconut milk can be. The coriander (cilantro) is great to freshen things up but it certainly isn't essential if you want to keep this as a strictly 'pantry' recipe.

enough for: 2

takes: 20 minutes

*1 can tomatoes (400g / 14oz)*

*1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)*

*200g (7oz) red lentils*

*1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes or 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder, optional*

*1 bunch fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves picked, to serve, optional*

1. Place tomatoes, coconut milk, lentils and chilli, if using, in a saucepan. Bring to the boil.
2. Simmer, covered for 10-15 minutes or until lentils are 'al dente'. Taste. Season.
3. Serve topped with coriander leaves if using.

## VARIATIONS

**no canned tomatoes?** – replace with 1.5 cups commercial tomato based pasta sauce, 4 tablespoons tomato paste + 1.5 cups water or 1.5 cups tomato puree.

**no coconut milk** – coconut cream is fine or replace with water or stock and add in a few tablespoons of butter or olive oil at the end.

**can't find red lentils?** – replace with green or brown lentils or even quinoa or brown rice. You'll need to cook these for much longer and may also need to add water.

**greener** – stir in some defrosted spinach or fresh baby spinach leaves at the end.



# Creamy Coconut Lentils...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more veg** – feel free to add zucchini, red capsicum (bell peppers) or finely chopped cauliflower. Again you may need to cook a little longer and add water so the veg soften.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with warm flatbread.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**tomatoes/ coconut milk / lentils / dried chilli** – all keep in the pantry indefinitely.

**coriander (cilantro)** – can be frozen. The leaves will wilt when defrosted but will still taste fragrant.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Great! Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. Can be frozen.

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

By Leo Babauta

If I could make a single dietary recommendation to people looking to get healthier, it would be to move to a plant-based diet.

Eating plants has been the best change I've made in my diet — and I've made a bunch of them, from intermittent fasting to low-carb experiments to eating 6 meals a day to eating almost all protein to eliminating sugar (all at various times).

Plants have made me slimmer, healthier, stronger, more energetic — and have increased my life expectancy (more on all this below).

Of course, the diet is simple, but moving away from the Standard American Diet to a plant-based one isn't always so simple for most people.

Changing your diet can be difficult, but in this guide I'll share a bit about how to change, talk a bit about why, and what you might eat.

## What's a Plant-Based Diet?

The simple answer, of course, is that you eat plants. You eliminate animals and (eventually) animal products like dairy and eggs.

The less simple answer is there is an abundance of plant foods that most people never eat, and eating a plant-based diet means you might widen the variety of foods you eat. For example, some of my favorite foods include: tempeh, seitan, tofu, kale, broccoli, quinoa, ground flaxseeds, ground chia seeds, raw almonds and walnuts, raw almond butter, olive oil, all kinds of berries, figs, avocados, tomatoes, lentils, black beans, spirulina, hemp seeds, nutritional yeast, organic soymilk, sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, apples, peaches, mangoes, pineapple, garlic, red wine, green tea, brown rice, sprouted (flourless) bread, brown rice, steel-cut oats.

A “plant-based diet” can be basically another way to say “vegan”, though many people do use the term to mean that you eat almost all plants with some animal products. In this post, I'll be focusing on veganism, as I believe it's the ultimate plant-based diet.

## Why Should I Change?

There are a few important reasons to eat plants:

1. **Health.** The basis of this guide is health, and many people switch to eating plants because they want to lose weight, improve their heart health, stay healthy as they age, improve blood pressure or deal with diabetes. A plant-based diet has been shown to help with all of these things — if you also stay away from the processed foods. A diet of processed flour and sugar and fried foods isn't healthy even if it's all plants (more on this below). The healthiest populations in the world are plant-based: the Okinawans (traditionally ate almost all plants such as sweet potatoes, soybeans, lots of veggies, with a little fish and occasional pork), the [Sardinians](#) (beans & veggies, red wine, some cheese, meat only once a week), and the vegan Seventh-Day Adventists in Loma Linda, California who are the longest-living Americans. Eating plants is the **best thing you can do** to [reduce your risk of the leading causes of death](#).

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

2. **Environment.** Honestly, while this is very important to me, it's probably the least important of the three reasons on this list (for me personally, that is). But it's huge: the biggest way to reduce your carbon footprint is to stop eating animal products — better than giving up a car (next best) or using less energy in your home or traveling by plane less or recycling or using solar energy or driving an electric car or buying fewer things. The animals we raise for food production use a ton of resources, eat way more plants than we do (which in turn also require resources to be grown), give off huge amounts of planet-warming methane, breathe out a lot of carbon dioxide, and create a lot of pollution. [This 2006 United Nations report](#) concludes that “Livestock have a substantial impact on the world’s water, land and biodiversity resources and contribute significantly to climate change. Animal agriculture produces **18 percent** of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions (CO2 equivalents), compared with 13.5 percent from all forms of transportation combined.” And it takes 4,000 to 18,000 gallons of water to make the beef for **one hamburger**, according to a recent report from the [U.S. geological survey](#).

3. **Compassion.** For me, this is the most important reason to move away from eating animals. I’ve talked a lot about compassion on this site, but by far the most cruel thing any of us does each day is consume animals (and their products). The cruelty that is perpetuated on these living, feeling, suffering beings on our behalf is enormous and undeniable. If you don’t believe me, [watch this video with Sir Paul McCartney](#) or this [video about pigs](#). While I became vegan for health reasons, I stick with it for reasons of compassion — wanting to reduce the suffering of other sentient beings.

But ... if you don’t do it to avoid [pollution, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, increased death rates](#), animal cruelty, global warming, deforestation, and higher costs ... maybe weight loss would do it. Vegetarians and vegans [weigh less on average](#) than meat eaters. That’s even after adjusting for things like fibre, alcohol, smoking ... and calorie intake! Half of Americans are obese, but vegans tend to be much less obese (with exceptions of course).

That said, just going vegan will not necessarily cause you to lose weight. You could easily eat a lot of sugar, white flour, fake meats and fried foods and gain weight. If you eat whole plant foods, you’re likely to lose weight. Plant foods, for starters, have pretty much no saturated fat, low calories and tons of fiber, while animal foods

**Beating Death:** I highly recommend watching [this video on uprooting the causes of death](#) using a plant-based diet. It’s a bit long, but well worth the time.

## How to Change

It will be no surprise that I recommend people start small and change slowly. A good plan is to make the change in stages:



# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

**1. Slowly cut out meat.** This stage is actually several smaller stages. You might try starting with [Meatless Mondays](#) and then, over time, expanding to other days of the week. Another common idea is to start by cutting out red meat, and then poultry, then seafood, in gradual stages of a month or even six months. There is no rush — do it at the pace that feels good to you. Another important point is that, as you eliminate meat, don't just fill it with starches (which don't have that much nutrition). Try new foods, experiment with ethic recipes, and explore different nutrients as you make these changes.

**2. Eliminate eggs.** After you cut out red meat and poultry, you'll be pescatarian (seafood). When you eliminate seafood, you're vegetarian! If you're eating eggs and dairy, that's called a "lacto-ovo" vegetarian. You can then eliminate eggs — and [no, they're not cruelty-free](#). This is one of the easier stages, in my experience.

**3. Cut out dairy.** This tends to be harder for most people. Not because of milk (soymilk and almond milk are good alternatives that just take a few days to adjust to) ... but because of cheese. I hear a lot of people say,

"I can't give up my cheese!" — and I empathize, as this was a sticking point for me too. It helps that there are better and better cheese alternatives these days (Daiya being a favorite of many). But for me, what made all the difference is not focusing on what I was giving up, but on the good things I could eat!

**4. Eat whole, unprocessed foods.** This is the phase that I'm in, and I wholly recommend it. You can go straight here if you have no problems changing your diet, but people eating the Standard American Diet will find it difficult, because the foods are very different than what most people eat.

For example, most people in the U.S. don't eat many vegetables, and find them distasteful, especially dark green leafy veggies, which are the best. I now love vegetables, and kale is my best friend. Most people dislike protein-rich plant foods like tempeh, tofu, seitan, and beans. Most people don't eat raw nuts — they eat roasted and salted nuts. However, all of this can change over time, which is why I recommend that you move into this slowly. What exactly is this phase? See the next section for details.

## What to Eat

So what do you eat when you're on a plant-based diet that focuses on whole foods? Lots!

A few categories of foods to include regularly:

**1. Beans and other protein.** This means the regular kinds of beans, like lentils, black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, etc. But it can also mean soybeans (edamame), tofu, tempeh, and seitan (protein from wheat, not good for gluten-intolerant people). It can also mean soymilk, soy yogurt, and the like, which are often fortified. Get organic, non-GMO soy.

**2. Nuts and seeds.** My favorites include raw almonds and walnuts, along with ground flaxseeds and chia seeds, and hemp seed protein powder. Almond milk is also good. And quinoa — it's like a grain, but really a seed, and full of nutrition.

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

3. **Good fats.** Fats aren't bad for you — you should just look to avoid saturated fats. Luckily, not many plant foods have saturated fats. Plants with good fats include avocados, nuts and seeds mentioned above, olive oil and canola oil.

4. **Greens.** This is one of the most important and nutritious group of all. Dark, leafy green veggies are awesome, and full of calcium, iron and a ton of vitamins. My favorites: kale, spinach, broccoli, collards. Eat lots of them daily! They also have very few calories, meaning they pack a ton of nutrition in a small caloric package.

5. **Other fruits and veggies.** Get a variety — I love berries of all kinds, figs, apples, citrus fruits, peaches, mangoes, bananas, pears, bell peppers, garlic, beets, celery, cauliflower ... I could go on all day! Get lots of different colors.

6. **Good starches.** Starches are not bad for you — but ones that have little calories aren't great. So find starches that give you lots of nutrition. Sweet potatoes, red potatoes, squash, brown rice, sprouted whole wheat, steel-cut oats, among others.

7. **Some other healthy stuff.** I love red wine, green tea, cinnamon, turmeric, spirulina and nutritional yeast.

OK, by now you might be overwhelmed by all of this. How do you put it together? It's not that hard once you get used to it. Start learning some recipes that combine some of these foods into meals, and over time, you'll have a few go-to meals that you love that are full of nutrition.

Some examples that I like (but don't limit yourself to these!):

\* **Tofu scramble w/ veggies:** some organic high-protein tofu crumbled and stir-fried with olive oil, garlic, diced carrots and tomatoes, spinach and mushrooms, and spiced with tamari, turmeric, sea salt and coarse black pepper.

\* **Steel-cut oats:** cook some steel-cut oats, then add ground flaxseeds, raw nuts, berries, cinnamon.

\* **Stir-fry:** Here's my secret ... you can make an endless combo of meals by cooking some garlic in olive oil, then cooking some veggies (carrots, bell peppers, mushrooms, etc.) and some protein (tofu, tempeh, seitan, etc.) and some greens (kale, broccoli, spinach, etc.) and some spices (turmeric or coconut milk or tamari & sesame oil, black pepper, salt).

\* **Veggie chili over quinoa:** Black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans with olive oil, garlic, onions, tomatoes, bell pepper, diced kale, diced carrots, tomato sauce, chili powder, salt, pepper. Maybe some beer for flavor. Serve over quinoa or brown rice.

\* **One-pot meal:** Quinoa, lentils, greens, olive oil, tempeh (or a bunch of other variations). Read [Tynan's post](#) on cooking this all in one pot.

\* **Whole-wheat pasta:** Serve with a sauce — some tomato sauce with olive oil, garlic, onions, bell peppers, diced kale and carrots, diced tomatoes, fresh basil, oregano.

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

\* **Big-ass Salad:** Start with a bed of kale & spinach, throw on other veggies such as carrots, mushrooms, cauliflower, snow peas, green beans, tomatoes ... then some beans, nuts and/or seeds ... top with avocado. Mix balsamic vinegar and olive oil, or red wine vinegar and olive oil, sprinkle on the salad. Yum.

\* **Smoothies:** Blend some almond or soy milk with frozen berries, greens, ground chia or flaxseeds, hemp or spirulina protein powder. Lots of nutrition in one drink!

\* **Snacks:** I often snack on fruits and berries, raw almonds or walnuts, carrots with hummus.

\* **Drinks:** I tend to drink water all day, some coffee (without sugar) in the morning, tea in the afternoon, and red wine in the evening.

**My Food Journal:** If you'd like to see my food journal (admittedly not always perfectly healthy), I've started one that [you can see here](#).

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Isn't it hard to get protein on a vegan diet?**

**A:** Not really, as long as you eat a variety of whole foods, and not a bunch of processed flours and sugars (the white kind that has little nutrition). There is protein in vegetables and grains, and even more in beans, nuts and seeds. I often eat protein-rich plant foods like tempeh, tofu, seitan, edamame, black beans, lentils, quinoa, soymilk, and raw nuts. [Read more here.](#)

### **Q: What about calcium or iron or B12?**

**A:** Again, it's not difficult at all. I've calculated the iron and calcium in my diet at various times, and as long as I'm mostly eating whole foods, it's really easy.

Nuts and green veggies are your best friends, but there's also calcium-fortified soymilk and tofu and the like. Eat some kale, quinoa, raw nuts, various seeds, broccoli, tofu or tempeh ... it's not difficult. Vitamin B12 is a bit more difficult to get from regular plants, as the main source of B12 is usually animal products — including eggs and dairy. But actually, vegans have figured this out, and now if you drink fortified soymilk or almond milk, or use nutritional yeast or a few other good sources like that, you will have no worries. More reading on [iron](#), [calcium](#) and [B12](#) for vegans.

### **Q: Isn't soy bad for you?**

**A:** No. [That's a myth.](#) I would stick to organic, non-GMO soy, but actually soy is a very healthy source of protein and other nutrients, and has been eaten by very healthy people for thousands of years. [More info here.](#)

### **Q: I follow the Paleo diet and believe this is how humans are meant to eat.**

**A:** Well, if you're eating unprocessed foods and have cut out white flours and sugars and deep-fried foods, you're probably healthier than the average American.

I admire the Paleo crowd that focuses on whole foods and that eats lots of veggies and nuts and seeds, but when it's just an excuse to eat lots of meat, it's not as healthy. It's also not true that hunter-gatherer societies ate mostly meat — the crowd that believes this has made a [flawed review](#) of contemporary hunter-gatherers. Most traditional societies eat, and have pretty much always eaten, mostly plants, including lots of starches — respected anthropologists such as Nathaniel Dominy, PhD, from Dartmouth College say that the idea of hunter-gatherers eating mostly meat is [a myth](#). Also [read this](#). I'd also warn against low-carb, high-protein diets over the long run — in the short term, you'll see weight loss, but in the long run they've been shown to [increase cardiovascular disease](#) (from June 21, 2012 issue of British Medical Journal).

### **Q: It sounds difficult and complicated.**

**A:** Actually it's very simple — you just learn to eat a variety of plants. It does mean learning some new meals, but instead of seeing that as a hardship, think of it as something fun to learn.

# A Guide to Eating a Plant-Based Diet

If you slowly change your eating patterns, it's not hard at all. Be flexible and don't be too strict — you'll find that it's much easier if you allow yourself an occasional meal with animal products, especially in the first 6-12 months.

## **Q: What about fake meats and cheeses?**

**A:** There's nothing wrong with giving them a try now and then when you're having a craving for something, but in all honesty you don't need them. They're more expensive and less healthy. Basically, they're convenience foods.

## **Q: What if I'm allergic to soy or gluten or nuts?**

**A:** It's still possible to get all the nutrition you need from a plant-based diets without a specific kind of food (like gluten or soy), from what I understand. [More here.](#)

## **Q: It sounds expensive.**

**A:** Actually it can be a lot less expensive, if you stay away from the vegan convenience foods (which are fine on occasion).

Meat is more expensive than beans or tofu, for example. While fresh, organic veggies can cost a bit, you should get these in your diet even if you eat meat — and in the long run, you'll save much more on medical bills.

## **Q: There's no way I'll give up (eggs, cheese, ice cream, etc.)!**

**A:** Well, you don't have to. If you want to eat mostly plants but also eggs and cheese, that's much better than eating meat. But there are cheese substitutes you can try, and vegan ice cream, and in the long run, you might find that giving these things up isn't as difficult as you think.

## **Q: What about eating out at restaurants or social gatherings?**

**A:** I'd recommend you take it slowly at first, and eat mostly plants at home, and be more liberal when you eat out, for a little while. You don't want to make this too difficult on yourself. But actually, once you learn some simple strategies, it's not that hard to find vegan food in restaurants — some are easier than others, and sites like [Happy Cow](#) make it easy to find veg-friendly restaurants in your area.

As for eating at friends' and families' houses, I've learned to offer to bring one or two vegan dishes, and it's not usually a problem.

## **Q: What if my family and friends don't support this change?**

**A:** It's best if you don't start preaching — people don't like it. This article might seem like a violation of that, but actually I rarely push veganism on this site, and when I do it's only as a way to show others a healthy and compassionate alternative. Remember that those around you probably don't know much about veganism, and are likely to react defensively. Take the opportunity, when they bring up the topic, to share what you're learning, and the concerns you yourself had when you first learned about it. Show them some great vegan food. Share this guide with them. And always be patient.

More answers here: [Vegan Outreach Q&A](#), [Vegan Nutrition FAQ](#), [Vegan Society FAQ](#).

The image features a background of horizontal wooden planks with a natural, weathered texture and varying shades of brown. A solid, light green horizontal band runs across the center of the image. The word "BEANS" is written in a white, distressed, serif font across this green band.

BEANS



zen habits three-bean veggie chilli

# Zen Habits Three-Bean Veggie Chilli

Make a big pot of this and you can eat it for lunch & dinner for 2-3 days. This is one of my favorite, yet easiest to make, vegan recipes. This is my original recipe, so if you like it, you are obliged to close your eyes, and savor the deliciousness.

*\*1 package Yves Meatless Ground Round (or any vegan ground beef replacement) – optional*

*\*one 14.5-oz. can each: black beans, pinto beans, and kidney beans*

*\*one 14.5-oz. can corn*

*\*one 29-oz. can each: stewed tomatoes & tomato sauce*

*\*half a yellow onion, diced*

*\*half a green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and diced*

*\*2-4 cloves garlic, diced (depending on how much you like garlic)*

*\*black pepper, salt, chili powder to taste*

*\*olive oil*

Dice up the veggies first, because the cooking will go fast. On medium high heat, heat up some olive oil, then saute the onions, then the garlic and bell pepper. Throw in the ground beef replacement (still frozen is fine), and let it brown. Add a liberal amount of chili powder and black pepper, and a bit of salt (I never measure, sorry).

Now dump in the beans and corn, one can at a time, stirring as you go along, making sure the bottom doesn't stick and burn. Add more chili powder and black pepper. Spice it up nice! Throw in the stewed tomatoes, stir, and then dump in the tomato sauce. Done!

Lower the heat and let it simmer for as long as you can resist. You can actually eat it right away (prep and cooking time: 10-15 minutes) or you can simmer it for 30 minutes, an hour or more. The longer it simmers, the better the flavors will all mix together. Taste it and spice it as needed. I like to add a lot of chili powder and black pepper. To crank up the heat, feel free to add your favorite red peppers early on in the cooking process.

Also feel free to add beer to the recipe and let it simmer a bit to soak into the chili.

Serve with brown rice, good bread, or blue corn chips. Enjoy!







white bean & avocado salad

# White Bean & Avocado Salad

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*2 tablespoons lemon juice*

*1 can white beans (400g / 14oz), drained*

*1 bag baby spinach*

*1 avocado*

*small handful roast almonds*

1. Combine lemon juice with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil in a large salad bowl. Season generously.
2. Toss drained beans and baby spinach in the dressing.
3. Halve avocado and scoop out bite sized pieces of flesh with a spoon and add to the salad.
4. Divide salad between two plates and serve with almonds sprinkled over.

## VARIATIONS

**no baby spinach** – just substitute in whichever mixed salad leaves you have on hand.

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with some halved cherry tomatoes for colour OR some finely diced red onion for crunch.

**mexican salad** – replace lemon juice with lime and toss in a little dried or fresh chilli to spice things up.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in torn sourdough bread.



VIDEO

# White Bean & Avocado Salad...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**lemon** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

**white beans, almonds** – pantry.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**avocado** – use for another meal.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Avocado can go brown if prepared in advance and salad will go soggy so best to make just before you're ready to serve.



vegetable & white bean stew

# Vegetable & White Bean Stew

When you're in the mood for serious veggie fix, this is the recipe for you. Clocking in at 4 serves of veggies, with tomato, zucchini, spinach and beans, it almost takes you over the line for your 5-a-day target.

enough for: 2

takes: 20 minutes

*1 can white beans (400g / 14oz)*

*1 cans tomato (400g / 14oz)*

*2 zucchini, sliced into coins*

*2-3 teaspoons smoked paprika*

*1 bag washed baby spinach leaves*

1. Place beans and their canning liquid, tomato and their juices, zucchini and paprika in a large saucepan.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook uncovered for about 10 minutes or until the zucchini is soft.
3. Add spinach and continue to cook, stirring, until the spinach is just wilted. About a minute or so.
4. Taste, season and served drizzled generously with your best peppery extra virgin olive oil.

## VARIATIONS

**no smoked paprika?** – replace with regular paprika or try a different spice. Ground cumin or coriander are favourites.

**moroccan** – turn it into a vegetable 'tajine' by replacing the paprika with 1/4 preserved lemon finely sliced and using chickpeas instead of the beans.

**different veg** – pretty much any vegetables you like can be added including carrots, broccoli, red or green capsicum (bell peppers).

**hot!** – add in some fresh or dried chilli or serve with a generous drizzle of chilli oil.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – toss in cooked short pasta or serve with crusty bread.



# Vegetable & White Bean Stew...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more veg** – add chopped eggplant, peppers (capsicum), onion or mushrooms.

**paleo (grain, legume & dairy-free)** – replace beans with [roast diced veg](#).

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**white beans / cans tomato / smoked paprika** – keep them in the pantry.

**zucchini** – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

**baby spinach** – either pop them in the freezer or wilt down in a covered pot with a little olive oil. This way they'll keep in the fridge for a few weeks.



GRAINS

rice & greens





# Rice & Greens

There's a classic Cuban dish of rice and beans which was everywhere when I visited. This is a 'fresher' healthier take.

If you can get spinach frozen into little 'bricks' rather than one big block, it's much better because it defrosts much more quickly. If you're stuck with a big frozen chunk of spinach, it may need a little spin in the microwave to speed up the defrosting process.

enough for: 2

takes: 15 minutes

*2 cloves garlic, finely sliced*

*1 can coconut milk (400mL / 1.5 cups)*

*1 packet frozen spinach (250g / 9oz), defrosted*

*1 packet par-cooked brown rice (250g / 9oz)*

1. Heat a little oil in a medium saucepan. Cook garlic on a medium heat for about 30 seconds or until starting to brown.
2. Add coconut milk, spinach and rice. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 2 minutes or until everything is hot.
3. Taste. Season. Serve.

## VARIATIONS

**sautéed greens** – just replace frozen spinach with your own sautéed greens ([recipe here](#))

**no coconut milk?** – replace with almond or soy milk – they'll be a little more watery so be prepared to simmer longer to thicken up.

**can't find par-cooked brown rice?** – most supermarkets now have 'pouches' of cooked rice but feel free to cook your own brown rice, just boil in water until just tender. Drain and use as per the recipe.

**rice alternatives** – risoni (orzo - rice shaped pasta), cooked short pasta, canned beans, canned chickpeas + see below.

**paleo (gluten, grain + dairy-free)** – you could replace rice with grated raw cauliflower – simmer until just cooked through.

 VIDEO

# Rice & Greens...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**lower GI / slow carb** – replace rice with cooked lentils, canned chickpeas, cooked split peas or quinoa.

**low carb** – replace rice with grated raw cauliflower – simmer until just cooked through.

**higher protein** – add in a drained can of black beans.

**fresh greens** – replace frozen spinach with sliced kale, cavolo nero, spinach, chard or silverbeet. Add with the garlic and cook until wilted before adding the other ingredients.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – add extra rice, warm flatbread or add some diced chicken.

**more veg** – extra greens like kale or chard or collard greens.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

Store all ingredients in the pantry!

## PREPARE AHEAD?

OK. Will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. The rice will absorb the liquid over time so it may dry out. Just add a splash of water as you reheat to moisten.

black quinoa & broccolini salad



# Black Quinoa & Broccolini Salad

To be honest, I don't find a massive difference in the flavour of the different colours of quinoa. So if you can only find white or red quinoa, go ahead and use what you have. In keeping with my 10 minute time limit, the quinoa comes out on the more 'al dente' side, which I quite like. If you prefer your grains to be softer and more tender, just cook a few minutes longer.

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*1/2 cup black quinoa (100g / 3 1/2oz)*

*1 bunch broccolini, chopped*

*1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar*

*1 small bunch chives, finely chopped*

*1/2 cup whole almonds, toasted*

1. Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to the boil.
2. Cook quinoa for 5 minutes. Add broccolini and continue cooking for another 4 minutes.
3. Meanwhile mix balsamic vinegar with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil. Season.
4. Drain broccolini and quinoa and toss in the dressing.
5. Add chives and almonds and serve hot, warm or chilled.

## VARIATIONS

**nut-free** – replace the almonds with some torn buffalo mozzarella, slices of goats cheese, a few chunks of ricotta or some generous shavings of parmesan.

**no broccolini** – replace with regular broccoli or a bag of salad or baby spinach leaves.

**different herbs** – feel free to use parsley, basil or mint instead of the chives.

**different grains** – replace quinoa with 1 cup cooked grains such as farro, brown rice or barley and skip the boiling step.



# Black Quinoa & Broccolini Salad...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**paleo** – replace quinoa with an extra bunch of broccolini / broccoli.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – extra quinoa or serve with warm tortillas or flatbread.

**more veg** – add snowpeas, frozen peas or shaved fennel.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**black quinoa / balsamic vinegar / almonds** – keep in the pantry.

**broccolini** – can be frozen. Or steam it and it will keep in a container in the fridge for a few weeks.

**chives** – keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few weeks but probably best to use for another meal.

# Liking Healthy Foods is a Choice

By Leo Babauta

I have a theory that I've been testing: whether you have a taste for a particular food is a choice.

I'm sure there are things you turn your nose up at: vegetables (lots of people), or kale (my kids), eggplant (Eva), tofu (many non-vegetarians), quinoa (crazy people), something.

But what I've learned is that tastes can change. In fact, we can change them on purpose:

\* I used to hate vegetables. Now I love them.

\* I used to hate soymilk when I first tried it. Now I drink it daily.

\* I didn't like brown rice, about 10 years ago. Now I much prefer it to white rice (which has no substance).

\* I used to love sweets, but I've given them up in the last few months and now I still would eat them but they wouldn't give me as much pleasure.

And on and on, dozens of times I've changed my tastes.

So if taste in a food can be changed, why do people dislike the taste of certain foods? **Because they're not used to them.** Once you're used to a food, it can taste great ... but when you're not used to a food, it's not so good.

Why do we dislike tastes that we're not used to? **Because we expect good food to be within a certain range of what we already like.** Within our comfort zone. This is our expectation, and when food doesn't meet this expectation, we dislike it. It's not that food is inherently bad-tasting. For example, many people dislike bitter foods ... but I love them. Umeboshi plums? Bitter beer? Dandelion greens? Love 'em. Food tastes bad because we're not comfortable with them; they don't meet our expectations.

But what if **we got rid of our expectations?** What if we said, "Food doesn't need to taste like anything. Let's see what this tastes like."

I heard tell of a wine expert who wanted to develop his palate, and so he would taste all kinds of things. Even dirt. Put dirt in his mouth, and see what it tastes like. Most people would be grossed out about it, but what if you just wanted to find out?

Be curious. Explore the taste of foods. Let go of expectations and prejudgements. You might find out some interesting things.

And by the way: this works with everything in life, not just food.



TOFU

scrambled tofu





# Scrambled Tofu

It took until I was experimenting with vegetarianism to appreciate tofu. This recipe originally appeared on Stonesoup as a curry. But it's super versatile so I've included it here as a breakfast, swapping curry powder for turmeric which gives the tofu a lovely sunny colour.

enough for: 2

takes: 15 minutes

*1 onion, peeled & chopped*

*1-2 teaspoons ground turmeric*

*35g (1.2oz) firm tofu*

*1 bag washed baby spinach leaves*

*big squeeze lemon juice*

## VARIATIONS

**onion-free** – just skip the onion.

1. Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil in a large frying pan.
2. Add onion and cook, (covered) over a medium high heat stirring frequently until the onion is soft and translucent but not browned.
3. Add turmeric and stir for about 30 seconds or until it smells divine.
4. Crumble the tofu with your hands and add to the pan. Stir well then cover and cook for a few minutes (you just want to warm the tofu through).
5. Add spinach and stir until spinach has just started to wilt.
6. Serve and enjoy.



VIDEO

# Scrambled Tofu...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**onion** – will keep in the pantry for months. Best if in a dark corner in a brown paper bag.

**ground turmeric** – keep it in the pantry.

**tofu** – will keep in an unopened packet for a few months (check use by date on packet). Opened packets can be frozen.

**baby spinach** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

**lemon** – whole lemon will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for months.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

This can easily be prepared ahead and reheated when you're ready to eat. Although I'd probably save adding the spinach until the last minute to keep it as fresh as possible.



chilli spiced tofu with hummus

# Chilli Spiced Tofu with Hummus

Tofu generally gets a bad rap for being bland. But as I learned when I was vegetarian for a month, it is a wonderful sponge for soaking up flavours.

I love this. The tofu takes on the chilli and smokiness from the paprika and cooks to a lovely reddish golden crispiness. With the calming influence of hummus and fresh fragrance of coriander (cilantro), you have a balanced meal in a bowl.

If you have the time to make your own hummus, I highly recommend trying out my [recipe on stonessoup](#).

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes*

*2 teaspoons smoked paprika*

*4 slices firm tofu, (about 300g / 12oz total)*

*6 - 8 tablespoons hummus*

*1 small bunch coriander (cilantro), leaves picked, optional*

1. Combine chilli and paprika with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Season and toss tofu slices in the spiced oil to coat.
2. Heat a medium frying pan or skillet on medium high.
3. Cook tofu for a few minutes each side, until crisp on the outside and heated through the middle.
4. Smear hummus over 2 plates. Top with tofu and sprinkle over coriander (cilantro) leaves.

## VARIATIONS

**sesame allergies** – replace hummus with chickpeas crushed with lemon & garlic. [recipe here](#).

**soy allergies** – replace tofu with lamb fillets or chops, chicken breasts, pork or halloumi cheese.

**don't have chilli flakes** – chilli powder will be fine, as would fresh chilli or even cayenne pepper. You will need to adjust the amount of chilli to suit your taste buds and the strength. 1 teaspoon chilli flakes would probably be equal to 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder or cayenne, give or take.

**don't have or like coriander (cilantro)** – ditch it, or swap for mint or flat leaf parsley leaves.



# Chilli Spiced Tofu with Hummus...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**dried chilli flakes / smoked paprika** – keep them in the pantry.

**tofu** – will keep in an unopened packet for a few months (check use by date on packet). Opened packets can be frozen.

**hummus** – will keep in the fridge for a few weeks. Can be frozen.

**coriander** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



winter veg stir fry

# Winter Veg Stir Fry

The real driving force behind giving this dish its Wintery vibe is the Chinese 5-spice. Its a blend of, you guessed it, 5 spices including cinnamon, star anise, cloves, fennel & black pepper. If you can't find it, try making your own by combining equal parts of the above spices. Or just use twice as much black pepper as cinnamon to make a simpler version.

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

*1-2 carrots cut into thin batons*

*1/4 white or chinese cabbage, sliced into ribbons*

*300g (10oz) firm tofu. sliced*

*1 teaspoon Chinese 5 spice*

*2-3 tablespoons soy sauce*

1. Heat a wok on a fierce heat.
2. Add a little oil and stir fry the carrots until browned.
3. Add the cabbage and stir fry for a few minutes or until just starting to soften.
4. Add the tofu and stir fry for another few minutes or until tofu is hot.
5. Stir in 5 spice and season with a generous splash of soy. Serve!

## VARIATIONS

**herby** – serve sprinkled with flat leaf parsley or mint leaves.

**hot!** – add a few finely sliced red chillies with the tofu.

**different veg** – brussels sprouts are lovely cooked like this. Also consider other root veg such as parsnips, turnip or swede (rutabaga). Tougher root veg may need to be simmered before stir frying.

**soy-free** – replace the soy sauce with fish sauce or oyster sauce. And replace the tofu with chicken, beef or pork. Or replace with a very large handful of roasted cashews or almonds.



VIDEO

# Winter Veg Stir Fry...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**no Chinese 5-spice** – try making your own by combining equal parts of cinnamon, star anise, cloves, fennel & black pepper. Or just use twice as much black pepper as cinnamon to make a simpler version.

**carb lovers / more substantial** – serve with steamed rice.

**more veg** – add snow peas or chopped broccoli.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**carrots** – keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks. Can be frozen if you're leaving town!

**cabbage** – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

**tofu** – will keep in an unopened packet for a few months (check use by date on packet). Opened packets can be frozen.

**Chinese 5 spice / soy sauce** – keep them in the pantry.





honey & soy tofu with  
sweet potato 'noodles'

# Honey & Soy Tofu with Sweet Potato 'Noodles'

Sweet potato is one of the few vegetables (side from potatoes) that my boys love. Needless to say, I'm always trying to come up with new ways to use the sweet spud.

While chopping into chip shapes and roasting in coconut oil is my go-to move, these spiralized 'noodles' are a close second. They do take a little more active time to prepare, but I've found little fingers love getting the spiralizer out. And they only take 10 minutes in the oven so they're pretty quick.

I was surprised how much they both love tofu. It's a great staple to have in the fridge for when you need some last minute protein. My favourite ways to use tofu are in an easy [tofu scramble](#), as a [tasty ragu](#), these [tofu 'steaks'](#) or pan fried and given a flavour boost with some honey and soy like in the recipe below.

Make sure you buy firm tofu (rather than silken) and organic so there's less likelihood of the soy being genetically modified.

enough for: 2

takes: 20 minutes

1 medium sweet potato

1 pack firm tofu (about 250g / 9oz)

2 teaspoons honey

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 bunch coriander (cilantro)

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Scrub sweet potato and spiralize into medium 'noodles'.
2. Place noodles on an oven proof baking tray. Drizzle with oil and toss to coat. Bake for 10 minutes or until 'noodles' are tender and cooked through.
3. Meanwhile slice tofu into 3 bricks about 1cm (1/3in) thick. Pan fry on a medium high heat with a little oil until golden brown on both sides.
4. Mix honey and soy sauce in a medium bowl. When the tofu is cooked, chop into bite sized chunks and toss in the honey and soy sauce.
5. To serve, divide warm sweet potato between 2-3 bowls. Top with tofu and sauce and coriander leaves (if using).

## VARIATIONS

**extra crunch** – serve with roast cashews or sesame seeds.

**green-free** – skip the coriander or replace with cashews or sesame seeds.

**carb-lovers** – toss in cooked noodles or spaghetti with the sweet potato. Or serve everything with steamed rice.

**low carb** – replace sweet potato with 2 medium zucchini.



# Honey & Soy Tofu with Sweet Potato 'Noodles'...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**no spiralizer** – chop the sweet potato into shoestring fingers and increase the cooking time until they are tender (about 20 minutes depending on your knife skills). If you're thinking about investing in a spiralizer, you might enjoy this article: [Do You Need A Spiralizer?](#)

**other veg** – carrots are also good.

**sweeter** – feel free to increase the honey.

**gluten-free** – use tamari or other gluten-free soy sauce.

**different sauces** – oyster or hoisin sauce can be used instead of the honey and soy.

**more grown-up** – toss in a little grated ginger and/or finely chopped garlic with the soy. And chopped green onions add lovely colour to the noodles. A few finely chopped red chillies wouldn't go astray either. Or serve with [Marco's Chilli Oil](#).

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**sweet potatoes** – will keep for months in the pantry in a brown paper bag or sack.

**tofu** – will keep in an unopened packet for a few months (check use by date on packet). Opened packets can be frozen.

**honey / soy sauce** – keep them in the pantry.

**coriander (cilantro)** – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the coriander separate. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in a wok or frying pan with a little oil and add coriander.

# 6 Ways to Make Vegetables Taste as Good as Potato Chips

By Jules Clancy

Recently I've been reading a fab little book by one of [my blogging friends](#). It's called 'The Butcher and the Vegetarian'.

It chronicles my friend's journey from vegetarian to occasional meat eater for health reasons. And it's a great read.

Tara talks about growing up, when her mother was all about making everything as healthy as possible. They often ate steamed veg with brown rice and NO oil or salt. Not exactly tasty.

It made me a little sad because I think there is often a misconception that healthy food can't be pleasurable.

The thing is, if you eat broccoli and actually enjoy it, you get the same health benefits as if you ate it like it were a badge of honour.

So today I wanted to share my favourite tricks for making veg taste amazing... Because aren't we all more likely to eat more veg if we actually enjoy them?

## 6 Ways to Make Vegetables Taste as Good as Potato Chips

### 1. Use salt

Many vegetables contain a lot of bitter flavours. And while a love of bitterness can be acquired, there is something you can do to mask it.

Yes, our old friend salt.

Really it makes a HUGE difference. Don't be worried about the negative health connotations associated with salt. That's for when you're eating industrial-sized quantities, not the small amount of sea salt that it takes to mask the bitterness in your broccoli.

Salt is also great because it enhances flavours.

### 2. Use some oil

Fat carries flavour and provides fat soluble vitamins which tend to be lacking in veg. So it's actually better for you to use olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil or even butter when cooking veg.

### 3. Don't boil your veg

One of the easiest ways to make veg taste yuck is to boil the hell out of them. Boiling is also problematic because your water soluble vitamins end up down the sink.

These days, the only veg I boil are broad beans, edamame and spuds for roasting or when I'm making mash.

So how do I cook my veg? Read on...

### 4. Roast, pan fry or stir fry

I love roast veg but they can take a while, so I often pop them in a frying pan for a speedier alternative.

Unlike boiling, these dry heat methods of cooking help add yummy caramelized flavours to your veg and remove excess moisture. Which is why they're so delicious!

# 6 Ways to Make Vegetables Taste as Good as Potato Chips

## **5. Use good quality veg**

When I was little I hated peas. Boiled frozen peas were all I knew. And then one day when I was older I had a life-changing spring vegetable soup at a little restaurant called the Lynwood Cafe which had its own vegetable garden. I couldn't believe that I not only liked the freshly picked sweet peas, I loved them.

Now I'm not saying there's anything wrong with frozen peas. They're a brilliant vegetable to have on hand.

I tell the story as a reminder that all veg are not equal when it comes to flavour. The carrot you get from the supermarket generally never holds a candle to one you grow yourself.

## **6. Use tasty accompaniments**

I'm a big fan of using tasty accompaniments to make my veg more palatable.

Here are some of my favourites: chilli, soy sauce, parmesan, miso paste, olives, peppery extra virgin olive oil, pesto, fresh herbs, spices and hummus.

BONUS: TREATS



raw 'blondies'

# Raw 'Blondies'

I really tossed up whether to include this recipe in the book. While the ingredient list may look healthy, they do contain a significant amount of sugar from the dates. They are super delicious, though so if you're in the mood for a real treat, this is the recipe for you! Plus as a bonus you don't even need to turn the oven on!

enough for: 6 to 8

takes: 15 minutes + 15 minutes cooling

100g (3.5oz) pitted dates

150g (3.5oz) almond meal

50g (1.75oz) coconut oil

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

2 tablespoons psyllium or oat bran (optional)

1. Place dates in a heat proof bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes.
2. While the dates are standing, weigh out your remaining ingredients into your food processor.
3. Drain dates and add to the food processor. Whizz for a few minutes or until you have a smooth mixture that clumps together.
4. Dump your mixture into a loaf pan lined with baking paper and use your hands to smooth out until it's the height you prefer. Don't spread the mixture over the whole base. Only use half or less.
5. Pop in the freezer for 15 minutes or in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or longer. Then chop into tiny squares.

## VARIATIONS

**chocolate brownies** – add 2-3 tablespoons cocoa powder to the mix.

**different nuts** – feel free to use other nuts or nut meals. Pecans are particularly good.

**short on time** – pop in the freezer to firm up. Will take about 10 minutes.

**medjool dates** – no need to soak, just be sure to remove the pits.

**more decadent** – cover with a layer of melted dark chocolate.

**low-carb** – I'm afraid you really need the dates to bind everything together. Sorry!





# Raw 'Blondies'...

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**dates / almond meal / vanilla extract / coconut oil / psyllium or oat bran** – keep them in the pantry.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes. Will keep happily in the fridge for a few weeks. And in the freezer for months.

pure chocolate mousse



# Pure Chocolate Mousse

One of my students, Kathryn, came up with a super difficult brief - dessert that is dairy, sugar, artificial sweetener and grain-free. And I think coconut-free as well. Anyway, I love a challenge and this pure chocolate mousse, inspired by Heston Blumenthal, ticks all the boxes. But not only that, it's absolutely delicious as well. One of those divine things that is both light and rich at the same time. And very satisfying.

enough for: 2

takes: 20 minutes

100g (3.5oz) dark chocolate  
(70% cocoa solids minimum)

1. Prepare an ice bath by placing a tray of ice cubes with water to cover them in a large mixing bowl. Place a smaller bowl inside.
2. Weigh 85g (3oz) water into a small saucepan. Break chocolate into chunks and add to the water.
3. Place over a low heat and stir for a minute or so until the chocolate is just melted. Be careful not to let it get too hot or the chocolate will split.
4. Transfer melted chocolate to the smaller bowl and whisk with a balloon whisk until you have a light moussy texture. Divide between two pretty serving glasses. Serve immediately.

## VARIATIONS

**chocolate hazelnut** – serve sprinkled with finely chopped roasted hazelnuts or mix them through the mousse.

**milk chocolate** – don't be tempted to use milk chocolate to make the mousse – there won't be enough cocoa fat to get the mixture to whip. Instead separately whip some cream and fold the two mousses together.

**chocolate swirl** – as per the milk chocolate, but only partially combine the two mousses so you end up with a lovely swirled pattern.

**chocolate snow** – those who prefer a less bitter chocolate might appreciate a dusting of icing (powdered) sugar over the top of their mousse.



# Pure Chocolate Mousse...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**lower carb** – use 90% cocoa solids chocolate. You may or may not like to add a little sweetener.

**salted chocolate** – serve with a few sea salt flakes sprinkled over.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**chocolate** – keep in the pantry.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

Best when freshly made. You could make these and keep in a cool place for a few hours but the texture starts to go a little grainy as the chocolate cools and the fat crystals form. Don't put it in the fridge or you'll end up with a solid block.



coconut berry swirl

# Coconut Berry Swirl

Berries have to be the best when it comes to quick, low-carb desserts that taste amazing. I love to mash them and swirl through cream or coconut yoghurt as I've used here. Both fresh and frozen berries work well.

enough for: 2

takes: 10 minutes

2 handfuls berries

2 large scoops coconut yoghurt

1. Mash berries in a small bowl with a fork.
2. Scoop yoghurt into two bowls, then swirl your berry mash through the coconut.

## VARIATIONS

**different berries** – I used mulberries in the photo but any berry can be used. Raspberries are my favourite here. For firmer berries like strawberries you might like to puree in the food processor.

**no swirl** – if you can't be bothered with the mashing and swirling, just serve berries on top of the yoghurt.

**no coconut yoghurt** – health food stores should be able to source commercial coconut yoghurt for you. Or try making your own.

**dairy-lovers** – replace coconut yoghurt with natural Greek yoghurt, double cream, whipped cream or mascarpone.



# Coconut Berry Swirl...

## VARIATIONS (continued)

**more decadent** – replace coconut yoghurt with vanilla ice cream.

**crunchy** – top with some roast sliced almonds.

**more substantial** – lovely with hot buttered toasted brioche or other sweet bread.

**sweeter** – if your berries aren't super ripe, add a pinch of stevia, a teaspoon of sugar or your favourite sweetener.

## WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

**berries** – use for another meal or freeze them.

**coconut yoghurt** – usually has a shelf life of a month or so. Otherwise, have it for another meal like breakfast! Don't freeze.

## PREPARE AHEAD?

I like these best on the day they're made. Can be kept for 1 week in an airtight container in the fridge. Keeps for months in the freezer.

# More on Healthy Eating

Flavourless: My Month of Boring Eating <https://zenhabits.net/tasteless/>

Vegan Guide to San Francisco <https://zenhabits.net/vegan-sf/>

A Vegan Tour of NYC <https://zenhabits.net/nyc/>

Tea Rituals <https://zenhabits.net/tea-rituals/>

12 Tips for Beating the Social Overeating Habit <https://zenhabits.net/full/>

It's Time for a New Relationship with Food <https://zenhabits.net/its-time-for-a-new-relationship-with-food/>

Habit Relapse <https://zenhabits.net/relapse/>

Becoming Strong & Healthy as a Vegan <https://zenhabits.net/plantstrong/>

7 Tips to Make Sure You're Getting Enough Vegetables <https://thestonesoup.com/blog/2011/04/12/veggie-love-7-tips-to-make-sure-youre-getting-enough/>

A new (surprising) reason to eat more vegetables <https://thestonesoup.com/blog/2014/12/02/a-new-surprising-reason-to-eat-more-vegetables/>

The Secret to Learning to Love Any Vegetable <https://thestonesoup.com/blog/2015/07/20/the-secret-to-learning-to-love-peasor-any-vegetable/>



# More Favourite Plant-Based Recipes...

## MINIMALIST BAKER

Sweet Potato Chickpea Buddha Bowls  
No-Bake Fudgy Chocolate Cake Bites  
Scocca Pizza with Sun Dried Tomato Pesto

## MY NEW ROOTS

Cream of Broccoli & Cashew Soup  
Tempeh Tacos with Raw Cashew Queso  
The Life-Changing Load of Bread

## GREEN KITCHEN STORIES

Yoga Pot  
Moroccan Quinoa Salad  
The No Recipe Curry

## DISHING UP THE DIRT

Late Winter Farmers Bowl  
Jamaican Jerk Eggplant Steaks  
Grilled Cauliflower Steaks with Chimmichurri  
Lentil & Mushroom Ragu

## DELICIOUSLY ELLA

Marinated Kale Salad  
Miso Aubergine & Bok Choy Stir Fry

## DREENA BURTON

Chickpea Tacos with Avocado Cream

## FORKS OVER KNIVES

Vegetarian Stone Soup  
Braised Red Cabbage with Beans

## OH SHE GLOWS

Cheerful Vegan Nachos  
8-Minute Pantry Dal

## 101 COOKBOOKS

Coconut Red Lentil Soup  
Green Falafel Bowl  
Coconut Bacon BLT

## COOKIE + KATE

Build Your Own Buddha Bowl  
Mediterranean Spaghetti Squash Bowls

## YVONNES VEGAN KITCHEN

Quinoa 'Meatballs'  
Savoury Indian Pancakes

## ANNA JONES

Tomato + Coconut Cassoulet  
Roasted Coconut Lime & Tamarind Curry

# About The Author



[Zen Habits](#) is about finding simplicity and mindfulness in the daily chaos of our lives. It's about clearing the clutter so we can focus on what's important, create something amazing, find happiness. It has over a million readers.

My name is Leo Babauta. I live in Davis, California with my wife and six kids, where I eat vegan food, write, run, and read.

# About The Author



Jules Clancy is a former Food Scientist turned Cookbook Author and Vegetable Lover.

**I only write recipes with 6-ingredients or less.**

I live in Australia and created "5-ingredients 10-minutes" among other books.

I've been blogging at [Stonesoup](https://www.thestonesoup.com) since 2005 because I believe that the ability to cook simple meals is a basic skill, like reading, that everyone should and can have.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food or taking photographs [of food], I can be found indulging my passions for reading cookbooks, growing my own veggies, cheese, red shoes and Irishmen, [OK one Irishman in particular].

You can contact me at:  
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If you're looking for more ideas for easy weeknight dinners, hop on over to my blog, [www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com) for FREE weekly email updates.

My recipes aren't all vegetarian but they each include a suggestion in the variations to adapt for a plant-based diet.

With Love,  
Jules x