

## Veganize Your Favorite Recipes



A lot of people are afraid to try vegan cooking and baking, assuming it will do away with their cherished family recipes. But, without much trouble or cost difference you can veganize just about any recipe in your favorite cookbook or recipe file. You can also easily add fiber, reduce salt and sugar, and take out some of the fat. Depending on your desired result, you can do quite a bit of “fiddling” with conventional recipes and not hurt the taste or texture one bit. Below are some common substitutions and modifications you can make in your own recipes.

**All-Purpose Flour** ~ While it is vegan, it doesn't have much else going for it. To add more fiber to your baking, use **whole wheat pastry flour** instead of, or in addition to, regular all-purpose flour. You *can* use regular whole wheat flour, but you'll notice the difference. You'll also need to experiment with ratios of white to whole wheat, so you don't end up with a brick instead of a cake.

The beauty of whole wheat pastry flour is that it can be substituted one-to-one in your recipes. Even in foods where you want a lighter texture, *it works very well*. I tend to use about half and half when baking cakes, but you can use all whole wheat pastry flour if you like. It has the fiber and nutritional value of whole wheat without the heaviness and ultra-wheaty flavor. Bob's Red Mill and Arrowhead Mills are two common brands.

(There is also a "white wheat" flour available, which is *close* to whole wheat pastry flour, *but not quite close enough* to use as a full substitute for regular all-purpose flour. It is a softer wheat so it's not as heavy as the usual whole wheat. It's worth giving a try to see what you think.)

**Butter** ~ We have always recommended *Earth Balance Natural Buttery Spread*. It is vegan and non-hydrogenated, plus it works great in baking and cooking. You can use it in any recipe calling for butter or margarine; it even works well for pie crusts. The problem is it contains palm oil, the exploding popularity of which has caused abundant environmental, animal, and human suffering. Until a vegan, non-hydrogenated, palm oil-free margarine comes along, though, *Earth Balance* is your best bet. Many people like to use coconut oil for cooking and baking, because it is solid at room temperature. You *can* make your own "butter" (see [VeganBaking.net](http://VeganBaking.net) and [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com) for recipes), with varying success. Some bakers rave about the results; others do not. You can also substitute canola oil for butter or margarine in certain recipes. Quick breads, like banana bread, corn bread, and muffins, are perfect recipes for substituting oil. Because oil is more of a liquid, you can use a bit less than the recipe calls for. If it calls for ½ cup butter (or margarine), for instance, you can easily use ⅓ cup canola oil.

**Dairy Cheese** ~ There are some dairy-free cheeses out there, but this is probably the biggest area of contention among vegans. One person's favorite may do nothing but trigger someone else's gag reflex. *Follow Your Heart* and *Daiya* seem to be the brands with the biggest fan base, but again, it's an individual thing. *Dr. Cow* is another brand that most people like, although it is quite expensive and only available online. You can even make your own cheese. Check out "The Uncheese Book" for recipes, along with [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com).

In recipes that simply call for a *cheesy flavor*, nothing beats nutritional yeast. It comes in a powder or flakes and can be bought in bulk at health food stores. It works well for stirring into sauces and toppings. You can find specific recipes on [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com).

**Dairy Cream** ~ A number of brands now carry **non-dairy “cream.”** Most are soy-based, but there is at least one non-soy vegan cream, called *MimicCreme*. It is made from nuts and comes in both sweetened and unsweetened varieties. Vegan homemade “ice cream” makers swear by the sweetened variety, while the unsweetened can be used in cooking sauces that call for cream.

**Dairy Cream Cheese** ~ There are now vegan substitutes for cream cheese, although you may have to get them at a specialty or health food store. Some brands include *Tofutti*, *Follow Your Heart*, and *Galaxy Foods*. You may find it in the dairy department or in the specialty section of the produce department. (Just be sure the brand you choose uses non-hydrogenated oil.) In spreads, soft tofu can also substitute. You will find lots of spread recipes on websites such as [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com).

**Dairy Milk** ~ Any of the **non-dairy milk beverages** work as substitutes for dairy milk. Soy and rice are the most common, but there are also almond, hazelnut, oat, and hemp to choose from. Depending on the flavor you want, coconut milk can also be used. Unsweetened soy works very well in sauce recipes, like white sauce for scalloped potatoes or macaroni and “cheese.” Almond milk is exceptional in dessert recipes.

Soy milk is good when you want a fluffier mixture, one with a little more volume. You can actually whip soy milk if it's combined with oil, because soy is an *emulsifier*, meaning it works to blend a liquid and a fat. For example, if you mix oil and water or milk together, they will eventually separate. But, if you mix oil and soy milk together, they will stay mixed.

**Dairy Sour Cream** ~ There are now vegan substitutes for sour cream, although you may have to get them at a specialty or health food store. *Tofutti* and *Follow Your Heart* are two brands. You may find it in the dairy department or in the specialty section of the produce department. Whipped soft or silken tofu can also be used instead of sour cream, especially in dressings and dips.

**Dairy Yogurt** ~ **Soy** and **coconut yogurts** are widely available in lots of flavors and brands. You just have to find one that has the taste and consistency you prefer. You should be able to find them in the dairy department.

**Eggs** ~ There are a number of reliable ways to replace eggs in baking and cooking, depending on your recipe. But, when it comes to the leavening properties of eggs needed in baking, **Ener-G Egg Replacer** can't be beat. There's no estimating amounts or adjusting liquids. You simply substitute an exact amount per egg (indicated on the box), and you're set. Some bakers use mashed banana or applesauce, some use a mixture of vinegar and baking soda, and some use tapioca or arrowroot powder. If you want to try other substitutions, or you need eggs for more than just leavening, see “**More Egg Replacement Tips & Tricks**” at the bottom of this page.

**Ground Beef** ~ If a recipe calls for 1 pound of ground beef, browned, you can substitute a 12-oz. package of either refrigerated or frozen **veggie burger crumbles**. *Boca, Lightlife, Trader Joe's*, and other brands make burger crumbles. Because ground beef shrinks in volume after cooking (the fat is melted and drained), a 12-oz. package of crumbles is equivalent to a pound of meat. You don't need to pre-brown the veggie burger; just add it as the recipe directs for the browned meat. For burgers (and for recipes), you cannot do better than locally produced *Match Meats*. Their "ground beef" comes in a 1-pound frozen package you shape into patties yourself.

You can also use textured vegetable/soy protein (TVP) in place of ground meat. The directions for reconstituting the dry flakes or granules vary widely, so it might be best to go with a specific recipe the first few times you use it, and then experiment on your own to find out which way you prefer. See [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com) for recipes, or one of the other recipe sites listed on our "Websites for More Veg Information" sheet.

**Jell-O** ~ Fruit flavored gel desserts made with plant, instead of animal, gelling agents can be found at Indian and Pakistani grocery stores, as well as online. BaKol is a spectacular brand that can be purchased at Fresh Thyme and online. You *may* also find **vegetable-based gel desserts** in the kosher section of large supermarkets. Unflavored gels, to which you add your own fruit juice, are available through online stores and in some health food stores.

**Mayonnaise** ~ There are a couple of good **vegan mayos** out there, like *Nayonaise* and *Vegenaise*. They are now more widely available, including in regular supermarkets. You'll find it in either the salad dressing aisle or in the specialty section of the produce department.

Another option is to make your own. Start out with about a cup of soy milk, and very gradually whip a thin stream of canola or olive oil into the cup. When it reaches the consistency you like (be careful not to overdo the oil), add salt and/or herbs to taste, and continue beating for another 30 seconds or so. Cover and refrigerate to store. (Note: Do not substitute other milk for soy – soy is an *emulsifier*, which means it can be used to blend oil and water-based liquid. Other milks will not achieve the thickness you want, *and* the mixture will separate.)

**Meatballs** ~ There are several brands of **frozen meatless meatballs**, but the best in terms of taste and texture are *Trader Joe's* own brand and *Nate's*. They come frozen in a bag, and you can bake them to use in appetizers, or just toss them frozen into your favorite sauce. Great flavor, exceptional texture.

**Meat Broth** ~ Any recipe calling for meat broth or bouillon can just as easily be made with **vegetable broth**. You can buy it ready-to-use in cans or cartons, or use **vegetarian bouillon cubes**. Bouillon brands like *Organic Gourmet* and *Rapunzel* make low-sodium varieties as well as the regular. All of these items can be found in the soup aisle of the store. (If you are unable to locate vegetable broth there, try checking the kosher section. You can almost always find vegetable bouillon cubes there.)

**Sausage** ~ Soy sausage comes in several brands and types. There are frozen breakfast patties and also refrigerated soy sausage rolls. Any of the brands and varieties can be used in recipes calling for sausage, including pizza topping and casseroles. *Match Meats* makes a sausage in frozen 1-pound packages. Flavored TVP can be used, as well. (See "Ground Beef" above.)

**Shortening** ~ See notes for "*Butter*" on previous page. *Spectrum* makes an organic, sustainable-certified, non-hydrogenated, all-vegetable shortening, but it is palm oil. A lot of cooks use coconut oil in recipes, because it is solid at room temperature.

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### **More Egg Replacement Tips and Tricks**

When making pudding or custard-type desserts and pies, soft or silken tofu work very well as egg substitutes. But, you will need a specific recipe, rather than a standard substitution amount. See [VegWeb.com](http://VegWeb.com) for recipes, or one of the other recipe sites listed on our "Websites for More Veg Information" sheet.

Here's a quick rundown on other egg replacement options:

(These work best when a recipe calls for 1 or 2 eggs.)

- ♦ 1 egg = 2 tbsp. arrowroot powder + 2 tbsp. water
- ♦ 1 egg = 2 tbsp. cornstarch + 2 tbsp. water
- ♦ 1 egg = ¼ cup puréed prunes, or applesauce, or mashed pumpkin
- ♦ 1 egg = ¼ cup whipped soft tofu
- ♦ 1 egg = 1 mashed banana: good in desserts but will make the final product more dense; add ½ tsp. baking powder for a lighter texture
- ♦ 1 egg = 2 tbsp. water + 1 tbsp. oil + 2 tsp. baking powder
- ♦ 1 egg white = 1 tbsp. plain agar powder (also called agar-agar) dissolved in 1 tbsp. water, whipped, chilled, and whipped again
- ♦ 1 egg = 3 tbsp. canned garbanzo bean liquid (works especially well when whipped multiple eggs are required for leavening; i.e., sponge cake and springerle cookies.)
- ♦ 1 egg white = 2 tbsp. canned garbanzo bean liquid + ¼ tsp. cream of tartar, whipped (works for meringues)

Remember that it's important to choose the appropriate replacer for each dish. Think about the function of the egg you are replacing: Is it there for binding or leavening or richness? Think about the flavors of the dish. After a little trial and error, you'll find at least one way to replace the eggs in just about any dish.