

ALICIA WITT



small CHANGES

a rules-free guide to add
more plant-based foods,
peace & power to your life



A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

Small Changes

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CHAPTER 3

Small Changes in Your Kitchen Give You Big Results

A Smart, Well-Stocked Pantry

This list contains items I consider essential for any home cook. You can buy them all at once or a little at a time.

Nonperishable Items/Pantry Staples

CANNED GOODS

- Beans: BPA-free canned cannellini, black, garbanzo (chickpeas), pinto
- Coconut cream, coconut milk

CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

- Coconut tamari (like soy sauce, but made with coconut)
- Coconut vinegar (same principle)
- Garlic powder, onion powder, Himalayan sea salt, assorted dried spices (tarragon, cardamom, dill, turmeric, lemon pepper, cumin, chili powder, star anise, saffron, and cinnamon are some of my most frequently used)
- Nutritional yeast

- Oils: cold-pressed coconut, grapeseed, extra-virgin olive
- Raw agave and/or maple syrup, raw organic coconut sugar
- Vanilla extract
- Vegetable stock, low sodium

DRINKS

- Milks: nonperishable, nondairy, unsweetened oat, nut, or rice (good to have in case you need some in a pinch, or for a recipe)
- Coffee beans, dark roast, for homemade cold brew
- Herbal teas, yerba maté
- Golden “milk” powder (optional)
- Water: If I’m on the road, the best quality I can find. If I’m gone for a long period of time (away from my home filtration system), a large refillable jug or two is best.

DRY GOODS

- Flour: gluten-free non-GMO (like Bob’s Red Mill brand)
- Granola: whole foods-based (such as Purely Elizabeth)
- Pasta: black soybean spaghetti and penne; red lentil penne; mung bean fettucine; whole grain, unrefined pasta (such as brown rice elbows)
- Grains: quinoa, old-fashioned organic oats, long grain rice
- Whole beans and lentils: dry, uncooked (home-cooked beans are healthier than canned and easy to get in the habit of cooking!)
- Dates: whole, unsweetened

NUTS

- Cashews, pecans, pumpkin seeds (pepitas), walnuts
- Nut butter: unprocessed, unsweetened

PROTEIN

- Protein powder (such as PlantFusion, unsweetened pea protein, or Four Sigmatic)

SNACKS

- Fruits: dried, unsweetened (mango, apple, banana, and so forth)
- Crunchy snacks: kale chips, beet chips, baked potato chips, taro chips, coconut chips

Pizza Cost Comparisons: Pepperoni with Veggies

	Fast-Food Pepperoni Pizza	Frozen Vegan Pizza	Homemade Vegan Pizza
Ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standard crust (large) ▪ Pizza sauce ▪ Mozzarella cheese ▪ Pepperoni ▪ <i>Additional toppings:</i> ▪ Mushrooms ▪ Red onion ▪ Green bell peppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gluten-free crust ▪ Pizza sauce ▪ Mozzarella shreds ▪ Meatless pepperoni ▪ <i>Additional organic toppings:</i> ▪ Mushrooms ▪ Red onion ▪ Green bell peppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pizza dough (16 oz) ▪ Organic marinara ▪ Mozzarella shreds ▪ Meatless pepperoni ▪ <i>Additional organic toppings:</i> ▪ Mushrooms ▪ Red onion ▪ Green bell peppers
Total Slices	8	3	4
Total Cost	\$18.19 (+ tax, and tip if delivered)	\$9.99	\$9.04
Cost Per Slice	\$2.27	\$3.33	\$2.26

My Perishable Items Shopping List

DAIRY AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES

- Daiya or Violife or other nondairy cheese, shredded
- Miyoko's (or Earth Balance) butter-substitute spread
- Vegan mayonnaise (I like Follow Your Heart soy-free)
- Plant-based cream cheese (Spero makes a delicious line of sunflower-derived ones!)
- Fresh-made milk substitute/creamers (oat, coconut, or nut-based—unless you plan to make your own [recipe on 54])
- If you're wanting to cut back on meat, I recommend some sort of meat substitute (Beyond Burger, Amy's burgers, Gardein "chicken," Field Roast sausage, Smart Ground vegan ground). These are important to keep on hand in case you get a craving—and all can be stored frozen.

FREEZER ITEMS

- Ezekiel bread (pre-sliced; keeps in freezer indefinitely)
- Frozen Daiya or Chloe's pizza—great in a pinch! Gluten-free crusts
- Frozen mango, pineapple, and blueberries (for smoothies)
- Nondairy ice cream and/or sorbet

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Avocados!
- Fresh fruits: blueberries, apples, pears, bananas, mango, papaya, kiwi, tangerines, citrus of all kinds, melon in season
- Garlic, onions
- Ginger root and fresh turmeric, if available
- Green leafy veggies: broccoli, kale, spinach, etc. (frozen is fine, but organic is most important here)

- Herbs: fresh cilantro, parsley, basil (again, try for organic)
- Mushrooms: portobello, shiitake, cremini
- Salad greens: arugula, spinach, mesclun, etc. (organic, if possible!)
- Squash: butternut, acorn, kabocha
- Sweet potatoes, potatoes, beets
- Tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, celery (organic, if possible, on these too)

OTHER PROTEIN SOURCES

- Hummus
- Tofu: organic, extra-firm, non-GMO
- Just Egg scrambled egg substitute (made from mung beans)

FOOD HAÜS

AMERICAN BISTRO

est. 1989

BREAKFAST

EGG WHITE FRITTATA

Egg whites, spinach, kale, tomato & onion

BREAKFAST BURRITO

Scrambled eggs, avocado, kale, sausage, skillet potatoes, cheddar cheese, black bean & corn salsa, in a flour tortilla

BREAKFAST SANDWICH

Scrambled eggs, spinach, tomato, sausage patty, cheddar cheese & sriracha on a roll

ALL-AMERICAN PLATTER

Three eggs any style, served with choice of bacon or sausage patty and two sides

STARTERS

CHIPS AND SALSA

Homemade spicy tomato salsa with fried corn tortilla chips

NACHOS

Traditional: Chicken, shredded cheddar cheese, pico de gallo, pinto beans & guacamole

Irish: Corned beef, kraut & cheese sauce

Steak: Seasoned tenderloin, green chile-cheese sauce, shredded lettuce, jalapeños, sour cream & tomato salsa

SOUPS

POTATO WITH BACON & CHEDDAR
TOMATO AND BASIL

SALADS

HOUSE SALAD

Lettuce blend topped with tomatoes, pickled onions, green pepper, croutons & choice of dressing

CAESAR SALAD

Romaine lettuce topped with parmesan cheese, croutons & Caesar dressing

SPINACH SALAD

Spinach topped with almond slivers, mushrooms, parmesan cheese, tomatoes, garlic croutons & hot bacon dressing

TEXAS WEDGE

Iceberg lettuce wedge served with red onion, candied pecans, bacon, tomato, apples & crumbled blue cheese

FOOD HAÜS

AMERICAN BISTRO
est. 1989

PIZZA

PEPPERONI PIZZA

Pepperoni & cheese

SUPREME PIZZA

Pepperoni, sausage, peppers, onions & cheese

TUSCANY PIZZA

Rotisserie chicken with parmesan cream, basil, pesto, sun dried tomatoes & spinach

FAJITAS

Sautéed peppers and onions with your choice of filling, served with flour tortillas & sour cream on the side

FILLINGS

Chicken, smoked brisket, pulled pork, skirt steak, salmon, shrimp

SANDWICHES & BURGERS

Comes with your choice of fries or a side salad

TURKEY CLUB

Melted swiss, avocado, applewood smoked bacon & hard-boiled egg

TURKEY BURGER

Brie, applewood smoked bacon, avocado, raspberry chipotle & mayo

CHICKEN SANDWICH

Grilled chicken, bacon, swiss cheese, avocado & house aioli

SOUTHWESTERN BURGER

Pepper jack, pico de gallo, guacamole, sour cream, poblano & grilled onions

ENTRÉES

CHICKEN TENDERS

Hand-breaded chicken served with a homestyle honey mustard sauce

QUESADILLA

Shredded cheese blend in flour tortillas and your choice of filling, served with salsa & sour cream

CHICKEN FRIED CHICKEN

Brine-marinated and hand-breaded cutlets topped with white gravy

Fillings: Cheese, spinach & mushrooms, chicken, steak, pulled pork, smoked brisket, skirt steak

SIDES: Onion rings, Baked potato, Steak fries, Coleslaw, Potato salad

recipes

Breakfast

Avocado Toast

Here is a spin I've never seen before on this popular breakfast item. I discovered it by accident, and I love the way the kiwi makes the avocado spread even greener.

1 small avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced

1/2 kiwi, peeled and sliced

Pinch of Himalayan sea salt

Sprinkle of ground tarragon

2 slices Ezekiel bread

Mash all the ingredients together and serve on toast.

Yields 2 slices of avo toast

Perfect Green Smoothie

I make some sort of version of this most days, varying wildly in ingredients based on what I've got sitting around. Now, I don't mind a really hearty smoothie filled with whatever healthy produce I have on hand

(that's code for *I wouldn't serve this to anyone but myself*) but when I made this one, I did a little happy dance and immediately wrote down exactly what I did. Because it was perfect!

- 12 ounces Harmless Harvest coconut water
- A handful each of fresh parsley and cilantro
- 2 handfuls fresh spinach leaves
- 1 “finger” fresh turmeric root
- 1/2 teaspoon spirulina powder
- 1/2 banana, previously frozen
- 1/3 cup frozen mango chunks
- 1 scoop vanilla protein powder (my favorite is Four Sigmatic; Orgain and PlantFusion also work well)
- 1 scoop Amazing Grass Green Superfood
- 1/2 teaspoon each Host Defense Reishi and Turkey Tail mushroom powders, optional (or substitute any mushroom-based immunity-boosting powder)
- 3 dates, pits removed

Place all the ingredients in a blender and use the liquify setting until the smoothie is free of any lumps.

Yields approximately 3 cups (enough for a satisfying meal, or split in half for two, and serve with a light snack)

Scrambled Beans

I started making scrambled beans for myself quite a while ago. I don't remember how I came up with the idea, but once I did, it was kind of a no-brainer. Why wouldn't you make scrambled beans? Even though I enjoy eggs on occasion, I much prefer my beans, as they're a great source of iron and fiber. And I love how they taste!

Also, if you're eating out, many restaurants don't think to have beans on their breakfast menu, but they're likely to have them in the kitchen, so they can make them for you. Ask for a side of avocado and some sautéed greens, or a piece of toast or side of fruit to go with them, and you're good to go.

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil
- 1 carton cannellini beans
- 1/4 cup water, plus extra
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- Dash of paprika
- 1/4 cup vegan cheddar shreds
- Pinch of salt

Combine the coconut oil and beans in a medium skillet over low heat and stir until the oil is blended with the beans. Add about 1/4 cup of water. Bring to a simmer, then add the nutritional yeast. While cooking, add the turmeric, paprika, onion powder, and garlic powder. Add a bit more water as the beans start to become more dry; don't allow all the water to evaporate until the beans have cooked and become creamy, for about seven minutes. When done, turn the heat off, immediately add the "cheddar," and stir until melted. Grind a little salt over it to taste, stir, and serve.

Note: You can also make a wrap out of these using collard greens. Place the leaf shiny-side down on the plate, then put your fillings in the center. Fold the top and bottom in first, then roll the left and right sides. Flip the wrap upside down; let the heat soften the leaf a bit before eating, which will make it less likely to fall apart.

Yields 2 servings

I love sneaking healthy ingredients into things that, on the surface, look like they're a treat rather than health food. *Why can't a pancake be both a treat and healthy?* I wondered. So I set to work inventing. This pancake also reminds me of buttermilk pancakes, which used to be a favorite of mine. The idea to combine banana and rosemary came by accident. I had some overripe bananas in my fruit bowl on the counter next to some sprigs of fresh rosemary I'd just picked. A waft of both scents met me while I was cleaning up after cooking dinner, and I instantly got excited to taste those flavors together.

- 1/8 cup quinoa flour
- 1/8 cup coconut flour
- 1/8 cup unflavored pure pea protein (like Whole Foods' 365 brand)
- 1/4 cup Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon maca powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/4 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt
- 1/2 cup almond milk

2 1/2 tablespoons water
2 1/4 teaspoons aquafaba
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1 heaping tablespoon maple syrup (plus more for serving)
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 1/2 tablespoons coconut oil, liquified (plus more for griddle)
1 very ripe banana, thinly sliced
Approximately 40 fresh rosemary leaves (minced if preferred—
taste is the same!)
Miyoko's "butter" for garnish (if desired)

Combine the quinoa flour, coconut flour, pea protein, baking flour, baking powder, maca powder, cardamom, and sea salt in an electric mixer (preferable) or whisk by hand. In a separate bowl, combine the almond milk, water, aquafaba, vanilla, maple syrup, lemon juice, and coconut oil, being sure to add liquified coconut oil last (you can microwave it for 15 to 20 seconds if it's too firm). Mix together with a small electric hand mixer or whisk by hand. With the large mixer running, add the liquid to the dry and mix on low, working up to high, till the mix is sticky and pancake-batter-like.

Heat a GreenPan griddle on medium-low for at least 3 minutes, with coconut oil rubbed over the surface with a paper towel. When the oil is lightly hot (separating into little pools on the surface), put the pancake batter in, 2 pancakes at a time, in 1/4 cup scoops. Then add about 5 banana slices and sprinkle 8 to 10 loose leaves of rosemary per pancake.

When the edges start lifting up, about 4 to 5 minutes, carefully flip the pancakes over. (Cooking times may vary based on your stovetop and your pan; if the pancake isn't yet ready to flip, let it be a bit longer!) Cook for another 2 minutes and then put on a plate, flipping again to serve, ba-

nana side up. Serve with maple syrup and a pat of Miyoko's plant-based butter, if desired.

Note: I also tried making this recipe with Four Sigmatic's excellent superfoods protein powder, which is packed with adaptogenic and immune-boosting mushrooms, as well as multiple sources of plant protein. I definitely prefer the consistency of the pea protein pancakes. However, the superfoods protein gave the pancakes an also-delicious whole-grain or buckwheat sort of vibe. I'd recommend trying both!

Yields 4 pancakes, or 2 servings

Thank-You-God Granola

I've been making granola for a long time, off and on, but in the past I always made it with honey, which helps it stick to itself. I'm a (mostly) plant-based eater who doesn't have a problem with ethically sourced honey, but some vegans don't use it. Also, I didn't want to use nut butter, since some people have nut allergies. My challenge was not in getting it to taste good, but in making it have those sought-after clusters. After no fewer than eight tries—the absolute most of any recipe in this book!—I literally prayed for this to turn out. And it did! No kidding, I couldn't even sleep at night while I was trying to get this one right. I hope you enjoy it. It's not too sweet, not too spicy, and not too crunchy—but it crunches and, yes siree Bob, it has clusters. Hallelujah!

- 1 tablespoon ground flax meal
- 3 tablespoons water
- 3 tablespoons coconut oil
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cup oats

3/4 cup coconut flakes
2 tablespoons coconut flour
1/4 cup coconut sugar
2 tablespoons hemp seeds
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons pecans (or substitute pumpkin seeds if you have a nut allergy)
3 tablespoons dried blueberries
3 chopped dried figs

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

Make the flax “egg” by beating the flax meal and water together in a separate small bowl, using a fork or small hand mixer. Set aside.

In a separate small bowl, mix the coconut oil, maple syrup, and vanilla. Microwave for 15 seconds if necessary to soften the coconut oil, although you don’t need to liquify it.

In a large bowl, mix together the oats, coconut flakes, coconut flour, coconut sugar, hemp seeds, cinnamon, Himalayan sea salt, nutmeg, and ginger. Add the coconut oil/maple syrup mix and blend thoroughly, coating all the dry ingredients. Add the pecans/pumpkin seeds and blueberries/figs and mix again to combine. Finally, add the flax mixture, mixing again with your hands, if possible, to be sure that it evenly coats everything.

Put a sheet of parchment paper on a cookie sheet. Put the granola on it in an even layer, though not so thin that you can see the sheet through the oats. (You want it to stick to itself slightly.) Bake for 15 minutes, take

out and check to be sure it's not getting too brown in places, as oven temps vary. Put the cookie sheet back in for 20 minutes, checking the granola every 10 minutes. If it does start to get too brown, turn those places, but the less you stir it, the more it will form into those sought-after clusters! Remove from the oven and allow the granola to cool completely before breaking it apart and storing it in a mason jar or glass container. Will keep fresh in the cupboard unrefrigerated for a month at least, and it can be stored in the fridge longer.

Note: If crunchiness is more important to you than clusters, go ahead and stir at the 15-minute mark, and you can cook it for an extra 5–10 minutes as long as it's not burning!

Yields approximately 4 cups of granola

Tofu Scramble with Sautéed Spinach and Ezekiel Bread

You can serve this with sliced fruit and half an avocado, if you like. You also can substitute one teaspoon of turmeric powder for the curry powder and fresh turmeric. I happened to make the recipe this way because of ingredients I did and didn't have—and I loved how it turned out.

- 8 ounces extra-firm tofu, drained
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill
- 1/2 teaspoon tarragon powder
- 1 tablespoon finely minced fresh turmeric root, peeled
(or 1 teaspoon dried powder)
- Dash of red pepper flakes
- Dash of curry powder, optional (to pump up the color)
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil

1/4 onion, chopped
Himalayan sea salt, to taste
3 cremini, shiitake, or white button mushrooms, sliced
2 garlic cloves, sliced
2 cups spinach
1 teaspoon olive oil
Dash of garlic powder
1/4 cup vegan mozzarella
Freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon chopped cilantro
1 teaspoon chopped chives
2 slices Ezekiel bread
2 scrapes of vegan butter and/or preserves of your choice

In a medium bowl, crumble together the tofu, nutritional yeast, cumin, dill, tarragon, turmeric root, red pepper flakes, and curry powder. In a GreenPan, sauté the onion on low-medium heat with 1 teaspoon coconut oil (don't heat the oil first). Add a grind or two of salt and cook until the onions are translucent. Add the mushrooms and garlic and cook until fragrant. Add the tofu mixture and cook for 10 minutes on low/medium heat. Put the Ezekiel bread in a toaster and set to medium. In a separate skillet, sauté the spinach with the olive oil and a dash each of salt and garlic powder. Cook on low/medium until the spinach is wilted, then add the vegan mozzarella to the scramble. Season with freshly ground black pepper and another dash of salt, if needed. Sprinkle cilantro and chives over the scramble. Spread a scrape of vegan butter and/or preserves over each slice of Ezekiel bread. Plate the tofu and the spinach, and serve with a slice of bread.

Yields 2 servings

Lunch and Dinner

Soups

Cream of Broccoli Soup

As you know by now, broccoli is one of my favorite things, and so is cream. I've tried many different vegan recipes for this, namely from *The Conscious Cook* and *Oh She Glows* cookbooks, as well as non-vegan ones back when I still ate dairy, and over the years, here's how I have learned to throw it together without overthinking it. It's a wonderfully easy but fancy-looking and tasting thing to get going on the stove when someone is dropping by for dinner unexpectedly.

- 1/2 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt (plus more for pan)
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 very large broccoli crown (approximately 2 cups when chopped)
- Cracked black pepper to taste (8 grinds, approximately 1/4 teaspoon)
- Juice from 1/2 a lemon
- 1 1/2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
- 1 1/2 tablespoons oregano, chopped
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 cup cashew cream
- 25 fresh basil leaves
- Handful raw spinach leaves

- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
- Vegan cheddar cheese shreds (for topping)

In a large saucepan, add 4 grinds of Himalayan sea salt and heat on medium for 30 seconds. Add the onion and coconut oil, cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic. Cook for another 5 minutes on medium or until onion is translucent. Add the celery and broccoli; cover and cook on medium-low for another 5 minutes. Add Himalayan sea salt, pepper, lemon juice, parsley, and oregano; cook another 3 minutes. Add the low-sodium vegetable broth, increase the heat to medium, and cover and cook for another 20 minutes, keeping an eye on the liquid level.

Add the cashew cream, then cook another 5 minutes on medium-low.

Transfer the soup to a blender. Add the basil, spinach, and nutritional yeast. With a hand towel covering the blender lid (to avoid hot splashes), blend starting on low, then slowly increase to the highest speed, until the soup is completely liquified.

Serve topped with a sprinkle of vegan cheddar cheese shreds.

Yields 2 large bowls, or 4 appetizer bowls

Cream of Tomato Soup ~~~~~

I remember how much I loved the comfort of cream of tomato soup when I did eat dairy, so I wanted to create a dairy-free version. I honestly don't think anyone would be able to tell the difference.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped coarsely
- 2 medium heirloom tomatoes (or other varieties), peeled
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped

1/2 cup coconut milk (full-fat)

Yields enough for 4 appetizer portions, or 2 larger bowls of soup

14 grinds black pepper

Approximately 1/2 cup fresh cilantro (loose leaves)

1 cup fresh basil (loosely chopped)

1/4 cup olive oil

Chopped avocado and tomato, for garnish

Peel the tomatoes by submerging them in a pot of boiling water for 2 minutes, then plunging them into a large bowl prefilled with ice and water. After they cool, roll off their skins, core, and chop coarsely. Put the tomatoes, cucumbers, sea salt, black pepper, cilantro, and basil into a blender, and blend until liquified. With the blender running, at a slightly reduced speed to minimize splashing, slowly add the olive oil (otherwise the oil will separate). Chill at least 3 hours. Shake or stir well before pouring the soup into bowls. Serve with chopped avocado and fresh tomato and the drizzle.

Yields 3 to 4 starter servings, or 2 larger ones

Drizzle

2 cherry tomatoes

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 grinds Himalayan sea salt

5 bunches fresh basil

Put the cherry tomatoes, olive oil, sea salt, and basil into a food processor and blend until liquified as much as possible. Strain the liquid out either with a fine mesh strainer or a cheesecloth, and use the strained liquid as garnish for the gazpacho.

Note: If you make this soup in a blender other than a Vitamix, you may end up with a chunkier gazpacho. It still tastes great! My preference here is for the silkiest, smoothest texture.

Sweet Potato Soup with Sage and Turmeric

Little did I know the first year I planted sweet potatoes in my Nashville garden that eighteen tiny sweet potato plants will grow five to seven sweet potatoes per plant, with each crop requiring digging up to two feet into the ground, chasing one to the next, like some sort of grossly misshapen Mardi Gras beads belonging in a giant's jewelry box. So the next year I cut back and only planted twelve in April. I didn't pull them up till November and ended up with sweet potatoes as big as my forearm (no exaggeration—see the photo in this pdf). Many of them were delicious, and I had to quickly come up with lots of creative ways to use them. Fortunately, this soup keeps well in the freezer and can easily be heated up when you want to eat it.

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 2 small yellow onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 medium Fuji apple, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 carton vegetable broth
- 1 can coconut milk (I prefer full-fat, but low-fat is fine if you want a lighter soup)
- 1 generous handful sage leaves, chopped
- 6 medium/large sweet potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
- Nutmeg, chili powder, Himalayan sea salt, and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 large “finger” turmeric root, peeled and coarsely chopped (if you can't find fresh, use 1 tablespoon ground turmeric instead)

1 to 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

Yields 2 to 4 servings

Chickpea Salad (Mock Tuna Salad)

1 (29-ounce) can or 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained

8 grinds black pepper

2 tablespoons Vegemaise

Juice from 1 lemon

1 teaspoon tarragon powder

Dash chili powder

1 heaping tablespoon parsley, minced

1/2 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt

Put all the chickpeas into a bowl, then add the pepper, Vegemaise, lemon juice, tarragon, onion powder, chili powder, chives, parsley, nutritional yeast, and sea salt, stirring each one to mix before adding the next. Using a potato masher or a large fork, mash the chickpeas and seasonings until about three-quarters of the chickpeas are mashed, leaving the others whole. Add the celery, if using, and serve. The salad will keep fresh for at least 3 days in the fridge.

Note: You can wrap this in a collard leaf wrap (or two) for a wonderfully balanced lunch. See note on collards on page 11.

Yields 4 generous scoop-size servings

Kale Salad

This is a salad where only kale will do. Rubbing avocado on some of the more delicate greens won't quite work the same, since they aren't as crunchy (and chopping them wouldn't be as effective either). However, if you love salad but kale isn't your favorite, please try this with spinach, collards, chard, beet greens, or arugula. You won't be able to mash the avocado in the same way, but you could still create a delicious "dressing" with the half avocado, salt, pepper, and a splash of water in a blender, and pour it over them. Variety is key. For some people, kale is harder to digest than these other greens.

Himalayan sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

Yields 1 serving

This recipe is also something I threw together that I thought was especially tasty. It's an example of how easy it can be to make inventive, crave-worthy lunches when your fridge is stocked with delicious ingredients.

Himalayan sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

Place the spinach in a large mixing bowl. Add the mango, avocado, a few dashes of the vinegar, and the extra-virgin olive oil. In a small frying pan, cook the Beyond Burger as directed. When you flip it, add the roasted sweet potato slices to the pan. Heat together for 3 minutes in the juices from the burger. Add a dash of olive oil if needed. When the burger is

Yields 1 serving

Wild violets, along with many other incredible medicinal “weeds,” grow plentifully in Nashville, and throughout many places. I love the flavor and beauty of violets, and many other edible and medicinal wild weeds are out there—including the common dandelion, which is a powerful liver cleanser. Make sure you consult with an expert before you decide something is edible (mine is my friend Kim Collins, East Nashville healer and natural medicine guru, who makes incredible tinctures and body balms from wild medicinals she harvests in her backyard). Violets are pretty easy to spot, but several weeds have look-alikes that are toxic, so if you’re in doubt, don’t eat it!

As for the greens, you can use any mix of them. Don't overlook spinach, collards, chard, beet greens, arugula, and other leafy greens, as variety is key and too much of anything can be too much. Some people also find raw kale difficult to digest. Spinach is high in iron, for example; iron is a nutrient you want to get plenty of, especially if you're cutting back on your meat intake. (If you're growing broccoli, Brussels sprouts, or other veggies, you can harvest their leaves to eat in a salad on their own or combined with other salad greens, or sautéed.)

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1/2 Fuji apple, sliced
Olive oil
Aged balsamic vinegar
Himalayan sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

Place the salad mix in a bowl. Top with the pumpkin seeds, avocado, and apple. Drizzle on the oil and vinegar, and season with salt and black pepper to taste.

Yields 1 serving

Pasta Dishes

Creamy Mushroom Pasta with Red Mung Bean Fettucine xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

The other day, when I was out of town, I had a craving for a creamy mushroom pasta I used to eat before I went dairy-free. So when I got home to Nashville, I made it with red mung bean fettucine. It was so *good*!

1 tablespoon coconut oil
1/2 onion, chopped
6 to 7 medium baby bella mushrooms, chopped
1 teaspoon garlic powder
A few pinches flour
1 cup vegetable broth
1/4 cup nutritional yeast
1/2 cup white wine
1 tablespoon thyme leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon tarragon powder
1/4 cup coconut cream
2 tablespoons coconut water
1 tablespoon parsley

Red mung bean or regular fettucine, cooked (2 servings, according to box measurements, or depending on how hungry you are!)

Paula's Bologneseze!

Paula is happy to contribute this recipe. It's her famous "Bolognese," as I call it, or "Bolognegeze," as she insists is its real moniker. Whatever you call it, it isn't any ordinary Bolognese. It's crazy delicious and a fantastic way to prove that you can have all the flavor you'd expect from the best possible meat dish, with zero meat!

Because this recipe takes some time to cook, I recommend making enough to freeze and use later. It keeps in the fridge for three to four days too. Once you make it, you'll crave it over and over, like all of us "East Nasty" gals do now. It's also what I make to put in my zucchini lasagna.

if I have time, or you'll find a much quicker (and less five-star cuisine) version of this under the lasagna recipe that follows.

- 2 tablespoons fennel seeds
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 cup olive oil (1 tablespoon set aside to soak spices)
- 3/8 cup red wine (1/8 cup to soak spices)
- 1 medium red onion, very finely chopped
- 1 package Smart Ground "meat"
- 10 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt and 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1/4 cup grated vegan parmesan (plus more for garnish, to taste)
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 2 cups mushroom broth
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar or cane sugar
- 1-pound box of pasta (spaghetti or capellini; cook according to box directions, al dente)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil, for garnish

Combine the fennel, red pepper flakes, oregano, and bay leaf. Add 1/8 cup red wine and 1 tablespoon olive oil, and let the mixture soak while you prepare the other ingredients.

Sauté the onion in olive oil on medium heat until translucent, then add the Smart Ground (breaking it up as you put it into the pan) and 1/2 of the garlic and cook another 5 minutes on medium. Stir in the fennel seeds/spice mixture, add the sea salt, pepper, and onion powder. Mix well and cook at medium/low heat for about 5 minutes, or until the meat

starts to get just a little crispy brown. Add the parmesan and tomato paste, and mix together. Then add 1 1/2 cups of broth, 1/2 cup at a time. Stir very well after each 1/2 cup, making sure to scrape all the meat off the bottom of the pan with each broth add. Mix the ingredients very well, cooking for about 2 minutes. Add the remaining red wine and the sugar. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring constantly, letting the mixture bubble and thicken. Add the remaining 1/2 cup of mushroom broth (be sure to constantly get the crusty tomato part off the sides of the pans).

Cook at very low heat for at least 30 minutes; get the water boiling for the pasta and time cooking it so that the pasta is ready at the same time as the Bolognese. Add more broth at the halfway point if gets too thick; cooking temperatures and pans will vary. Remove the pan from heat; fish out the bay leaf and discard.

Serve over your favorite pasta (Paula's favorite is capellini), with fresh basil generously sprinkled on top. Add a bit more vegan parmesan to top it all off.

Note: Be careful to use red pepper flakes, not ground red pepper!

Yields 4 servings

Stovetop Mac and Cheese (and Veggies)

I've been making various recipe versions of this for so long, at this point it's become second nature for me to whip up my own spin on it. This one takes a lot less time than other recipes I've come across. Bonus!

Cashew Cheese

- 1/2 cup cashews, soaked for 24 hours
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 cup nutritional yeast
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 1/2 cups nut milk (almond or macadamia preferred)

Blend the cashews in a food processor for 45 seconds. Add the garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and the nutritional yeast and blend for another 30 seconds. Add the vinegar and nut milk and pulse until blended.

Mac and Cheese

1 cup chickpea rotini
1 teaspoon olive oil
1/4 onion, thinly sliced
1 broccoli crown, chopped
4 to 5 mushrooms, chopped
1/8 to 1/4 cup vegan parmesan

Cook the rotini according to the box directions, but shave 1 to 2 minutes off the cooking time. Heat the olive oil in a GreenPan for 1 minute, then add the onion and sauté for 3 minutes on medium heat, stirring frequently. Add the chopped broccoli crown, cook another 2 minutes, then reduce the heat to medium-low, continuing to stir. Add the mushrooms and cook another 2 minutes or so. Add 1/2 to 3/4 cup of the cashew cheese mix and stir to coat the veggies. Stir in the rotini and cook on low for another minute, or until everything is nice and warm. Add the vegan parmesan, turn off the heat, and stir until the cheese is melted. Serve immediately.

Yields 2 to 3 servings

Veggie Dishes

Basic Basil Pesto/Broccoli

I often make a pesto that I keep in my fridge when I'm home, as it's incredibly simple and delicious. If it's only me for dinner, one of my favorite meals is a copious amount of broccoli with just enough water in the bottom of the pan to steam it al dente, so that the water is nearly gone by the time the broccoli is done. Mix that with pesto, and there's nothing else I could want. Broccoli in quantities like that has protein and iron in it—not to mention a lot of water—so it's filling and great brain food, and the pesto makes it extra delicious. My dad's tip is to use the highly nutritious inside of the broccoli stalks in salads as well.

You can use pumpkin seeds or pecans instead of pine nuts, and parsley instead of, or in place of half of, the basil.

You can also turn this pesto into salad dressing! Simply put a generous tablespoon of it in a small bowl and add about 2 tablespoons of hot water to start. Whisk with a fork and add more hot water if needed until it's creamy.

3 raw cloves garlic

2 heaping packed cups fresh basil leaves (you can substitute fresh parsley for some of the basil, if you like!)

2 teaspoons nutritional yeast

1/4 cup vegan mozzarella-style shreds

1/3 heaping cup pine nuts (or pumpkin seeds or pecans)

1/4 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt (more to taste)

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground cracked black pepper (more to taste)

3 tablespoons olive oil

Blend the garlic in a food processor, then add the basil, nutritional yeast, mozzarella-style shreds, and pine nuts. Blend thoroughly, and drizzle in the olive oil while doing so, if possible. Stop blending when the pesto reaches your desired consistency (I prefer it chunky). For a creamier pesto, you can also add a smidgen of water. Adjust seasonings as desired.

Add to your lightly steamed broccoli to taste—or to just about everything else!

Yields about 8 to 10 servings of pesto

Butternut Squash Roast

My dad has been making a version of this my whole life. My variation only has a few extra ingredients for bringing out the flavor in this delectable squash. It's about as easy and quick as it gets.

1 medium butternut squash

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup pecan pieces

1/4 cup maple syrup

A few grinds of Himalayan sea salt

Ground black pepper to taste

Dash nutmeg, if desired

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut the butternut squash down the center, then scoop out the seeds. Place the squash facedown on a glass baking tray, very lightly oiled. Bake for 40 minutes. Flip the squash halves face-up, fill the center with the maple syrup and pecans, add the salt, black pepper, and nutmeg, and bake for another 7 minutes or so.

Note: This can be a side dish or a main dish, depending on what else you're making.

Yields 1 squash

Ginger Beets

I love ginger, I love beets, and they're both strong antiviral boosters. I put this together with ingredients I had during quarantine times.

3 small beets cubed (trim off any skin that looks blackened or bruised; you don't have to peel them completely)

 $\frac{1}{3}$ orange

1-inch chunk of ginger, slivered, bruised skins and ends peeled off

1/2 Fuji apple, thinly sliced

2 teaspoons olive oil

1/2 teaspoon dried dill

1/4 teaspoon ground Himalayan sea salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 320 degrees. Place the beets in a casserole dish or small roasting pan. Squeeze the orange over them. Add the ginger, apple, olive oil, dill, salt, and black pepper, and mix well. Bake for approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

Yields 1 serving

Herb-Roasted Potatoes

These potatoes taste equally delicious fresh out of the oven or served cold the next day with some nondairy sour cream.

2 Yukon Gold potatoes, cubed (skins on or off, your choice)

1 tablespoon olive oil

4 grinds Himalayan sea salt

2 healthy handfuls of fresh herbs: destemmed rosemary, oregano, sage, or dill

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Place the potatoes in a roasting pan,

Yields 1 serving

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 8 Brussels sprouts, halved
- 1/4 yellow onion, chopped
- Tarragon powder, garlic powder, and red pepper flakes, to taste
- 1/3 packet Beyond Meat ground “beef” (or substitute vegan bacon, cut into strips)
- 1/4 cup cooked chestnuts, chopped
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon coconut aminos

Yields 1 serving

Miso Eggplant

Miso eggplant is one of my favorite things to order at a Japanese restaurant. Since eggplant is so easy to grow in Nashville, I wanted to figure out a way to make something delicious out of it—and quicker than a lot of recipes I've tried, which require first marinating the eggplant or pressing all the water out of it.

- 2 cups eggplant, peeled and chopped (approximately 1 large or 2 medium)
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon white miso
- 2 1/2 tablespoons hot water
- 3 grinds Himalayan sea salt
- 5 grinds cracked black pepper
- 1 teaspoon raw agave syrup
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced

Grind salt into a stainless-steel frying pan, then add the eggplant and coconut oil. Cook on medium heat, stirring every 2 minutes or so, until the eggplant starts to give off water and begins to sizzle, about 6 minutes. While the eggplant cooks, whisk together the miso and hot water until it becomes a smooth paste and most of the lumps are out. Add the miso mixture to the eggplant, then the sea salt, black pepper, and agave syrup. Stir to coat, then cover the pan. Reduce the heat to low-medium and cook an additional 10 minutes, stirring every few minutes. Remove the mixture from the pan and put into a glass dish, add the parsley, and stir to mix. Add additional salt to taste. Refrigerate until cold if desired, or eat warm!

Yields enough for at least 4 appetizer portions

Quick Broccoli Coconut Curry

This recipe is perfectly calibrated to a GreenPan, but if you don't have one, don't worry! Just add 2 to 3 minutes of cooking time to each instruction, and add a teaspoon of coconut oil along with the broccoli.

Himalayan sea salt

1 broccoli crown, chopped into bite-sized chunks

1/4 can coconut milk

1/2 teaspoon curry powder

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

In a GreenPan, add a few grinds of Himalayan sea salt, then add the broccoli and cook on medium-low for 2 minutes. Add the coconut milk, curry powder, and garlic powder, and stir to coat. Cover the pan and cook another 3 minutes, until the broccoli turns bright green and is tender but not overdone and the coconut milk is absorbed.

Yields 2 servings if eating as a side dish, 1 serving as the entrée

Black Bean Burger

I love black beans, and I love the convenience and protein of a vegan burger. But, delicious as they are, I don't always want to eat processed meat substitutes. Plus, unlike commercially available burgers, this is *extremely* inexpensive to make, proving once again that plant-based food doesn't have to be costly to be delicious! (At \$0.99 for a 13-ounce container of organic black beans, I estimate the total cost of all the ingredients for this dish is around \$1.50.)

4 tablespoons aquafaba

1 cup black beans, drained

2 heaping tablespoons chopped pecans

1/2 cup chopped parsley
2 dates, chopped
1 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon dried dill
1 dash chili powder
6 grinds of Himalayan sea salt
1 teaspoon coconut oil (or avocado oil)
2 tablespoons quick oats
1/4 cup gluten-free all-purpose flour (for spreading on a board)
2 teaspoons sunflower oil or olive oil

Whip the aquafaba with an electric hand mixer until frothy. In a food processor, add 3 tablespoons of aquafaba, the black beans, pecans, parsley, dates, onion powder, dill, chili powder, salt, coconut oil, and quick oats. Mix only until combined but still chunky, about five or six pulses (do not turn into a paste).

Scoop out the contents, half at a time. Form into a ball and place on a board that's covered in flour. Turn to coat all sides. Turn again on the top and bottom, while flattening the ball into a patty. Repeat with the remaining half of the bean mixture.

Put the sunflower oil or olive oil in a skillet and preheat on medium-low for 2 minutes.

Place the burgers in the skillet and cook on medium/medium-low heat for 4 minutes. Flip and cook another 4 minutes on the other side. Flip once more, making sure the burgers absorb any remaining oil, and cook another 4 minutes. Press the back of a spatula into the tops of the burgers from time to time. Flip again and cook for 4 minutes, once more pressing into the tops of the burgers with that back of your spatula.

Yields 2 servings

Sea-Free “Crab” Melt

A nice side dish for this is sautéed spinach, cooked on low heat for five minutes with a dash of olive oil and a little curry powder. The extra warmth combines with this melt for the perfect comfort treat meal—and a well-balanced plate to boot!

- 1/2 teaspoon coconut oil, plus more for the toast
- 2 jackfruit “crab” cakes (Trader Joe’s or other brand)
- 2 slices Ezekiel bread
- 1 to 2 tablespoons pesto (page 32)
- 1 to 2 slices vegan cheddar or gouda cheese
- Sliced avocado and papaya, optional

Heat the coconut oil in a large frying pan for a minute, and then cook the “crab” cakes on low heat, until nicely browned on both sides, about 10 minutes. Add a bit more oil if needed to prevent the cakes from sticking. Break the cakes apart into small pieces. While the crab cake cooks, toast the Ezekiel bread, then spread some coconut oil on one side of each slice. On the other side, spread a generous layer of pesto. Place a slice of the vegan cheese on the bread slice, followed by the “crab” and then another slice of cheese. Top with the other slice of bread, pesto side facing in. Cook the sandwich in the same pan on medium-low for about 3 minutes. (The coconut oil on the bread should be enough to keep it from sticking, but if not, you can add a bit more.) After the sandwich has started to melt and sizzle, carefully flip it over and cook on the other side. Serve with sliced avocado and papaya, if desired.

Yields 1 serving

Zucchini Lasagna

I love to make this, whether or not I have homegrown zucchinis that need eating, because it's just as satiating as pasta-based lasagna, but so much lighter. I'd describe it as "full but not about to explode." And if you've ever seen *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life*, you know the perils of feeling like you're about to explode.

Note: You can also make this with rice lasagna noodles (cooked as directed on box) or traditional lasagna pasta.

Fancy Tofu Cashew Ricotta

This needs preparation two days in advance. You'll find basic instructions for making a quick tofu or cashew ricotta.

- 1 package extra-firm tofu, drained
- 1 cup cashew cream
- 2 capsules probiotics (I like Ora brand, but any will do)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt, or to taste

Himalayan sea salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 yellow onion, diced
1 16-ounce package Beyond Meat
2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
Dash chili powder
8 grinds black pepper
9 ounces tomato paste (1 1/2 6-ounce cans)
1 1/2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

Grind Himalayan sea salt on the surface of a skillet first, to coat, and heat for 30 seconds on medium. Then add the olive oil and onion and sauté for 5 minutes or until onion is translucent and fragrant. Add the “meat,” break it up, and let it sauté about 2 minutes while you chop the herbs. Add the basil, oregano, chili powder, and black pepper; mix well. Sauté 5 minutes to let the herbs absorb into the meat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, add the tomato paste and broth, and stir to combine thoroughly. Cover and cook 20 minutes, checking and stirring every so often. Uncover and let the remaining liquid evaporate, turning the heat back up to medium, stirring frequently to be sure it doesn’t stick, another 5 minutes or so. Add additional salt to taste.

Additional Ingredients

1 1/2 8-ounce bags vegan mozzarella shreds (approximately
3 cups, plus more for top)
1/8–1/4 cup vegan parmesan (like Go Veggie)
4–5 zucchinis, sliced approximately 1/2” thick and cut so that
each slice is roughly the same size and they lay flat, by
trimming the oblong shape on the sides

Greens Mix

2 cups chopped kale/spinach or a mix of the two

2 tablespoons pesto (page 32)

Put the greens on the bottom of a medium saucepan, pesto spooned on top, on medium-low heat. Stir occasionally, till the greens are cooked down enough to where you can mix them all together and they're almost the consistency of creamed spinach, approximately 6 to 7 minutes. When the liquid has evaporated, turn off the heat, cover the saucepan, and set aside.

Assembly

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Use a deep 8 x 8-inch square glass pan. Try to find one that's 8 x 8 x 2.7-inch or you won't have enough room to cover the dish with foil at the end, and the food will touch the foil, which means the lasagna is sitting too high. If your pan isn't deep enough, you can still make the dish. At the end try to arrange the foil so it's not sticking to the cheese. Better still, I'd suggest investing in a Pyrex or other glass, or ceramic, lasagna pan that comes with an oven-safe cover. I'm not a fan of cooking with the aluminum foil directly touching what you're about to eat, if you can help it. Plus, if your foil is touching the cheese, it'll pull the cheese off when you uncover it.

Put a thin layer of tomato sauce on the bottom of the pan, then a layer of zucchini.

Layer the kale/spinach mix, then a layer of mozzarella shreds, then a layer of meat. Place another zucchini layer, then the ricotta mix, a thin layer of mozzarella, and another zucchini layer. Follow with the remaining meat sauce and another layer of mozzarella. Cover the pan with foil, trying not to touch the cheese on top. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil, add an extra sprinkle of mozzarella shreds and the parmesan. Cook

for another 10 minutes or so, until the cheese on top is well melted (keep checking; if it isn't quite melting, add a little more cheese and turn the temp up slightly, especially at higher altitudes). Let the lasagna sit and cool for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Note: If you want to make a larger version of this in a rectangular 13 x 9-inch pan, you'll need to add 50 percent more to all the ingredients—except for the ricotta, which makes enough in this recipe for the larger size. Or just double the ingredients, and you'll have enough meat sauce to freeze for another time.

Yields enough for at least six, more if you're serving sides with it

Desserts

Chocolate Mint Avocado Mousse

There's nothing better than chocolate mousse, says I. Well, except for chocolate mint avocado mousse, with the healthy fats of avocado snuck into it! Plus, it's insanely easy (and impressive) to whip up when you have someone dropping by. If there's any leftover, you can freeze it, as it tastes absolutely delicious thawed.

- 2 ounces 100 percent cacao unsweetened chocolate
(if possible; just make sure it's dairy free)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 3 small avocados or 1 large, peeled, pitted, and chopped
(approximately 1 cup)
- 3 tablespoons raw agave syrup
- 4 tablespoons coconut milk (not low-fat)
- 1/4 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt

10 drops real peppermint flavor oil (such as Frontier brand)
or 5 fresh mint leaves
1/8 teaspoon guar gum (available in baking sections)
Mint leaves, for garnish

Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil, and place a heat-safe glass or ceramic bowl on top of it. Add the chocolate and vanilla, keeping an eye on it as it melts, stirring to avoid sticking. Put the avocado in a small food processor or bullet blender. Add the agave syrup, coconut milk, salt, and peppermint oil (or fresh mint, if using). When the chocolate is melted, transfer it (using an oven mitt to handle the bowl!) to the food processor or blender. Add the guar gum and immediately blend until it reaches a mousse consistency. Spoon the mousse into ramekins or tiny glass bowls and chill. Serve with a few fresh mint leaves and some berries on top, if desired.

Note: I love the idea of using fresh mint, but the mousse *will* blend better and be more smooth and decadent if you use peppermint oil, so that's what I'd recommend if you want that wow factor. Just be sure to use real peppermint oil, not spearmint. Don't go making chocolate tooth-paste mousse!

Yields 2 large servings in ramekins, or 4 servings if you use mousse as topping for berries or other cut fruits

Strawberry Trifle

This is something I often crave, since I used to love fresh strawberry ice cream, and it was something my dad would make from scratch. Later, when I started eating “real” ice cream, Häagen-Dazs Strawberry was one of my favorites. This is a beautiful dairy-free (and cholesterol-free) adaptation and incorporates fresh berries too. It can easily be made with any kind of berry you like or have on hand.

- 1 5.4-ounce can pure coconut cream, chilled in fridge at least 24 hours (Let's Do Organic is what I often use; you can order it online)
- 1 teaspoon raw agave syrup
- 16 strawberries, sliced

Turn the can of coconut cream upside down and open it. Pour off the liquid and set it aside. Put all the cream except for 1 tablespoon in a small bowl. With a hand mixer, whip the cream until it becomes the consistency of whipped cream. Combine half the berries with the cream, and put it in the fridge again.

Put the remaining berries in a blender, add the coconut water, the reserved cream, and the agave syrup. Blend till liquified and set aside until ready to serve. Divide the whipped cream/berry mix between two bowls and pour the liquid around it. Serve with fresh mint, if desired.

Note: To make coconut whipped cream extra fluffy, you can add a small amount of guar gum ($\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon) and 1 tablespoon of powdered sugar to start with. Tapioca starch can also help. Sometimes, depending on the brand of coconut cream and how cold your fridge got it, you don't need anything else added. It also helps to chill your mixing bowl first, but this step isn't necessary.

Yields 2 servings

Snacks

Cilantro Hummus

I actually intended to make this as parsley hummus, but because I store both my parsley and cilantro in the fridge leaves up, with stems in glasses of water to keep them fresh, I accidentally grabbed the cilantro

instead! I'll blame it on quarantine brain, but it turned out even more delicious than parsley hummus. This is delicious with fresh raw broccoli and zucchini slices.

3 cloves garlic (Maybe less if you're having company—I can smell my breath as I write this!)

1 can chickpeas, drained (save the liquid if you can use it within two days to use as a substitute for egg in a recipe)

10 stems of cilantro (full stem and leaves)

1/2 lemon, peeled (keep the pith on)

$\frac{1}{8}$ cup tahini (or 1 tablespoon sesame seeds or pine nuts)

6 grinds of Himalayan sea salt

8 grinds of black pepper

1/4 cup olive oil

In a food processor, grind the garlic cloves first. Add the chickpeas, cilantro, lemon, tahini, salt, and black pepper. Grind only until chunky—otherwise it will turn to paste! Stir in the olive oil.

Yields 1 bowl o' delicious hummus that won't last!

Creamy Black Bean Dip

A friend of a friend of a friend brought a black bean dip she'd made on board a boat trip we were both on, maybe twenty years ago. I've never been able to re-create her recipe, but I kept trying to come up with my own, since I loved the idea of making something delicious and dip-able out of protein-rich black beans. When I happened upon this combo, I knew this was the one I'd be making from now on.

3 small cloves garlic

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained

Generous handful of cilantro, finely chopped
One organic and non-overly-ripe tomato
Cumin powder, to taste
Generous portion of lemon pepper—much more than you think
you need
Himalayan sea salt (or other salt), to taste
Finely minced jalapeño or chili powder, optional

Combine the onion, garlic, cilantro, tomato, cumin, lemon pepper, and salt, mixing well and adding the avocados at the end. (They start to go brown once they're cut. To keep them green, put the pit of the avocado into the guacamole until you're ready to eat, and then stir well.)

Note: You can double up on preparing all the ingredients except the avocados, and store that mixture in the fridge if you're expecting more people at a later time. Use half the mixture for the first batch, and when you're ready for round two, take the remainder out, add the avocados, and you're ready to rejoin the party (and everyone'll be even more glad to see you again than they normally are).

Yields plenty of guacamole for a party of ten!

Drinks

Until I starred in *Playing Mona Lisa* when I was twenty-three, I'd never had a drink. Because I'd had such an unhealthy relationship with food, I wasn't sure if that would translate to alcohol in the same way. Brooke Langton, who played my best friend in the movie, suggested I try port. I loved its sweet, dessert, decadent flavor, and I loved the tiny wine glass it came in, and that became a delightful routine when we'd go out to a bar. Plus, port is so rich, you really have to sip it slowly.

The first time I got drunk was during the week and a half I spent working on *The Sopranos* with Michael Imperioli later that year, playing the fabulously fake D-Girl of the episode's title. When I told him I was a classical pianist, he said he owned a bar on the Lower East Side in Manhattan, with a piano, and he'd love to hear me play. Some of the crew was coming by a bit later that Friday evening. Would I like to join them?

By the time I got there, I hadn't had dinner, and after a long week of work, I thought it would be a good idea to order a Cosmopolitan, another drink I'd only just discovered. That went down easy, so someone asked if I wanted another, and that went down easy too. On an empty stomach as a nondrinker. When I finally sat down at the piano, that was the moment it all hit me. I wasn't just buzzed: I was *drunk*. Not only was it my first time, but I also learned I cannot play classical piano in that state. Of course I chose a Chopin Ballade, the hardest piece I knew, because I wanted to show off, but it was like my fingers were one or two steps behind my brain. I knew what I was supposed to be playing, but my fingers wouldn't work. Michael had pulled up a chair and was sitting expectantly about two feet away from me, eyes fixed on the extraordinary feat he was about to witness. It was extraordinary, all right!

I spoke to both Michael and Drea de Matteo, who played Adriana, recently, and they both swear they had no idea. But Drea pointed out they were all pretty hammered, which I'd never thought of until that moment!

The Alicia Margarita

I have turned most of my partaking friends on to high-quality tequila as a substitute for wine, beer, or cheap whiskey. It is not only delicious, clean, and hangover-free (when drunk in moderation, and not mixed with crappy sugary mixes of course!), but it also has much lower acidity and sugar than other alcohols. And fewer calories as well!

my favorites, but any clear tequila will do!)

1 ounce fresh-squeezed lime juice

1/2 ounce fresh-squeezed orange juice

1/2 ounce fresh-squeezed lemon juice (adjust these to taste)

Small squeeze of raw agave syrup

Ice cubes

Crushed ice

Coarse Himalayan sea salt or sugar, optional

Fiercely shake the tequila, lime juice, orange juice, lemon juice, and agave syrup in a shaker, with solid cubes of ice, until frothy. Pour over crushed ice. If desired, first rub the glass rim into half a cut orange, to coat with a bit of juice, and then dip the rim into a plate of either coarse Himalayan sea salt or sugar, if you want a salted or sugared rim.

When out at a bar, this drink can easily be modified: ask for silver tequila, shaken with pineapple or grapefruit juice, and served with fresh lime wedges you can squeeze into your drink yourself. The extra sugar in the grapefruit and pineapple takes the place of the agave.

Yields 1 serving

The Citrus Blast Margarita

With this version, you get the full nutrients and health benefits of these incredible citrus fruits.

Citrus Mix

1 orange, peeled

1 lemon, peeled

1 lime, peeled

1/4 cup water

Margarita

4 ounces citrus mix
2 ounces high-quality blanco tequila
 $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce Grand Marnier or Cointreau
Small squeeze of raw agave syrup
Crushed ice
Fresh mint for garnish

Place the orange, lemon, and lime in a Vitamix blender with the water and liquify (if you don't have a Vitamix, you'll need to strain the mixture after blending it). Add the mixture to a shaker with the tequila, Grand Marnier/Cointreau, and agave syrup, and shake fiercely with ice until frothy. Pour over crushed ice. Garnish with fresh mint.

Note: I use $\frac{1}{3}$ of the citrus mix per margarita, and store the rest in the fridge for up to 4 days.

Yields 1 serving

Cucumber Ice Cubes Are a Great Way to Save Fresh Cucumbers

This idea came from yet another one of my bumper crops, in 2019. One of my favorite tricks is to peel some cucumbers, put them in a blender or Vitamix, add a little bit of water, and blend well. Then I pour this into some ice cube trays and let it freeze. These cubes are a delightful addition to cold drinks—with alcohol or just to freshen up your water on a hot day. I also love to do this with watermelon.

Gin Fizz

I was in the mood for getting fancy with it a few years ago, using pine simple syrup leftover from a Christmas party I'd thrown—but regular simple syrup will do too. (You can also make your own even more delicious simple syrup: add a tablespoon of organic raw cane sugar and a tablespoon of low-glycemic monk fruit sugar to a few tablespoons of hot water; mix till liquified.) And I'm loving experimenting with aquafaba as an egg-white substitute, particularly in traditional cocktails that are made using raw eggs. I'd like to take this opportunity to point out that a friend of mine became severely, dangerously ill with salmonella poisoning and was hospitalized for an entire week after consuming a few cocktails made with raw eggs. So, even if you don't choose to cut eggs from your diet completely, I highly recommend not using raw eggs in cocktails. It seems to me that this is a chance to play it safe—and the drink tastes just as good, I promise. And then you can enjoy your eggs in dishes where you can really taste them.

2 ounces gin

1/2 ounce Cointreau

1/4 ounce simple syrup

1 ounce aquafaba (page 201)

Solid ice cubes

Crushed ice

Rosemary sprig and green olives for garnish

Fiercely shake the gin, Cointreau, simple syrup, and aquafaba in a shaker, with solid cubes of ice, until frothy. Pour over crushed ice. Serve with a rosemary sprig and green olives on a skewer.

Yields 1 serving

Pumpkin Spice Martini

You'll find the recipe for my homemade nut milk at the end of this section. To make the pumpkin spice martini, you first need pumpkin spice milk. It makes the perfect welcome-to-fall cocktail.

1/2 cup pumpkin spice nut milk (page 249)

2 ounces gin, vodka, or tequila (I'm not much of a vodka drinker, but this recipe works well with that!)

1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Mix the pumpkin spice nut milk, gin/vodka/tequila, pumpkin pie spice, and cinnamon together and shake fiercely in a shaker with ice. Serve straight up with a sprinkle of nutmeg on top.

Yield 1 serving

Watermelon Rosemary Summer

Two of my favorite things, combined into a wonderful cocktail! I loved discovering that rosemary leaves blend with watermelon as well as they do. The juice retains its pink color because you don't need much rosemary to give it this subtle flavor. Rosemary is also anti-inflammatory and good for your brain, among other things.

8 big watermelon cubes

10 rosemary leaves, plus 1 sprig for garnish

2 ounces Bombay Sapphire gin

Blend the watermelon and rosemary leaves in a blender or Vitamix until liquified. To a cocktail shaker, add 3 ounces of that mix, and save the rest in the fridge (it'll keep for a few days). Add the gin and top with a rosemary sprig.

Yields 1 serving

Alcohol-Free Cocktails!

I enjoy spirits, but I also take at least two weeks off from partaking, at least twice a year. And of course, I have many friends who do not drink. A super-easy adaptation for creating virgin versions of pretty much all of the above: substitute equal parts aloe juice for the alcohol indicated in the recipes! (I like Lily of the Desert Whole Leaf Aloe Vera Juice for this purpose.)

Pecan-Walnut Milk

Homemade nut milk is incredibly easy to make as well as incredibly delicious. Pecans and walnuts are loaded with antioxidants and help raise your good HDL cholesterol and lower your bad LDL levels. Walnuts are an excellent source of vitamin E and omega-3 fatty acids, so they're extra good for your brain. Pecans also contain more iron, magnesium, zinc, and B vitamins than other nuts traditionally used for milk. Adding the sunflower lecithin means this milk won't separate nearly as much when you add it to a hot or cold drink—much more the consistency of store-bought nut milk, but way more delicious and decadent. The lack of separating also means it's a lot easier to froth up to make lattes. This is because the lecithin helps keep the good fats combined together.

Tip: Even store-bought nut milks will separate if you add cold “milk” to scalding hot coffee. The best way to avoid the separating is to add your milk first, and then pour your coffee into the cup.

6–7 pecans
6–7 walnuts
3 dates, pitted
3 cups water, room temperature
1 teaspoon sunflower lecithin
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3–4 grinds Himalayan sea salt

For a Pumpkin Spice version, add:

1/2 teaspoon more lecithin
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4–1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, optional, to taste
2 heaping tablespoons pumpkin puree

Soak the pecans and walnuts in cool water in the fridge, overnight if possible, or for at least an hour or two, then drain. In a Vitamix or other blender, add the room-temperature water, pecans, walnuts, dates, sunflower lecithin, vanilla extract, and salt. Blend until liquified.

There's no need to strain the milk, especially if you soak the nuts first. Or you can strain in a paint thinner bag (available from online retailers) or nut milk bag if you aren't using a Vitamix and your blender doesn't quite whip everything all the way into a liquid. If you choose to make this milk with almonds, you will need to strain it.

Note: You can use one tablespoon of maple syrup instead of dates, if you don't have them handy. Also, you can store this milk in the fridge for three to four days.

Yields about 3 cups

The • exercises

Lunges with Bicep Curls and Shoulder Presses

1. Lunge on your right side while holding dumbbells.
2. Do a bicep curl with both arms as you lunge. Return the weights to starting position as you come up from the lunge.
3. Start with 8 reps and build up to 16 to 20 reps.
4. Lunge on your left side while holding dumbbells.
5. Do an upward shoulder press with each lunge. Start with dumbbells at a 90-degree angle, parallel to your chest. As you lunge, move the dumbbells straight up, not meeting at your head, being sure not to lock or overextend your elbows. Move the dumbbells back to starting position as you come up from your lunge. Be sure not to lock your front knee as you come back to starting position.
6. Start with 8 reps and build up to 16 to 20 reps.
7. Do at least 2 sets; switch bicep curls to left lunge, and shoulder presses to right lunge.

Bent-Over Row

1. Standing while holding dumbbells, bend at the waist to an L-shape (not a U-shape), holding stomach muscles taut, with dumbbells straight down.
2. Raise the dumbbells to parallel with your ribcage.
3. Start with 8 reps and build up to 26 reps.
4. Do at least 2 sets.

Note: If you're at a gym with a rowing machine, you can use that as an alternative. As another alternative—or in addition to, if you have access to a bench—you can kneel on the bench with your left knee, putting your left palm on the bench, and, keeping your back flat, hold a dumbbell in your right hand and raise until it is parallel to your ribcage. Repeat on the other side.

Shoulder Fly

1. Standing straight, raise the dumbbells up to a fly position, then back down.
2. Start with 6 reps and build up to 12 to 16 reps.
3. Do at least 2 sets.

Note: I still can't do a full set with twelve-pound weights on these! This exercise is more difficult, and we don't use our side shoulder muscles in daily life, so please go easy on the weights, especially to start with.

Triceps Extension

1. With knees slightly bent in a light squat position, hold dumbbells at your hips, palms facing in.
2. Move both dumbbells backward, as if you're pouring water out of a bottle.
3. Start with 8 reps and build up to 16 reps.
4. Do at least 2 sets.

Dead Bugs

These are hard but an extremely effective way to work and strengthen your entire core. My longtime friend Bobby taught me these. We never could understand why they were called Dead Bugs though. Shouldn't they be "Beetle Flipped on Its Back" or, at the very least, "Dying Bugs"? A dead bug wouldn't be able to do this, after all. Don't be a dead bug!

1. On a mat or a well-cushioned floor (you don't want carpet burns on your back), lie on your back with your arms extended in front of your shoulders. Bend your hips and knees to a 90-degree angle.
2. Tighten your abs and slowly extend your left leg toward the floor, while bringing your right arm straight up, fingers pointing to the sky.
3. Repeat on the opposite side. One completion of each side equals one rep.
4. Start with 10 reps on each side and build up to 64 reps.

Firm Your Butt While You Brush Your Teeth!

Here's one of my favorite hacks: do your squats while brushing your teeth! You should be able to get about thirty of them in, each time. Be sure to go slowly and with proper form (below). If you brush your teeth twice a day, this will firm and lift your butt, hamstrings, and quads in no time.

1. Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart, toes straight ahead or slightly pointed toward each other. Be sure you have solid footing—no wet floor or slippery socks. If you're standing on a mat, please be sure it's secure before proceeding. I prefer to do this either with bare feet or in shoes.
2. I like to have one arm raised (the one you don't use to brush your teeth) so it's at a diagonal line up from the floor when you're lowering yourself to the squat position, like an extension of your head. This keeps your spine straighter—aim for a straight(ish) line from the lowest vertebrae

to the top of your neck, which in a squat position means the line points straight on a slight diagonal. You don't want to be curving your spine in a U shape more than you need to, as that puts strain on the lower lumbar. The raised arm helps to send your attention out the top of your head, even as you're squatting and working the hamstrings and glutes.

3. Feel your hamstrings working as you come up out of each squat. Push into your heels as you go.
4. Do reps until you're done brushing your teeth. For me this is usually 30 reps, depending on how quickly I do each rep. This also helps you make sure to thoroughly brush!

Note: If you have a bad back, hip issues, or vertigo, do these very slowly and carefully. If you feel any twinges, stop right away.

Optional: Side Lifts

This is great for your side stomach muscles, but be careful not to bounce as you come up. Smooth and steady movements, as with all of these exercises, is key. Start with light weights, and there's no need to increase to weights that are challenging for you on this one. It's more for toning than building a muscle.

1. Stand straight, with your feet firmly planted on the ground and a light dumbbell in each hand.
2. With slow, controlled movements and your belly firmly tucked in, extend your left side toward the ground, head continuing to face forward. Stand up straight again, then extend your right side toward the ground, and so on.
3. Once you've completed both sides, that equals 1 rep. Start with 6 reps and build up to 16.
4. Do 2 sets.

Broom Twists

This is great for your back. If you have a broom or something like that handy, you can hold it straight out in front of you, palms facing downward, and slowly pivot your waist from left, as far as you're comfortable going, to right, and back again. Don't swing or overextend—the key is moving slowly and smoothly.

A Few More Exercises with an Exercise Ball

Another inexpensive and useful thing to own is a big, round, and bouncy exercise ball. (Don't confuse it with a medicine ball, which is also a useful tool but is small and weighted, usually starting at ten pounds.) You can use it both as a makeshift bench for seated arm exercises or as a back support for modified crunches. While lying on a mat, you can also use the ball to do hamstring/glute curls.

Chest Fly

This is great for firming that stubborn little place we all seem to have in our armpit area, ladies!

1. Lie on the exercise ball, supporting your mid-upper back and neck, with feet planted on the ground and glutes firmly tucked.
2. Take a weight in each hand, fists facing each other. Stretch your arms out, away from your chest, and inhale. In smooth movements, bring the weights back to center as you exhale.
3. Repeat 8 times to start and build up to 16 reps.
4. Do at least 2 sets.

Chest Press

1. Lie on the exercise ball, with your head flat on the ball, supporting your mid-upper back and neck, with feet planted on the ground and glutes firmly tucked.
2. Take a weight in each hand, fists facing straight in front of you and elbows at your ribcage. As you exhale, bring the weights straight up (no need to bring the weights in front of your body to meet—this can build tension where you don't need it). Inhale, bringing the elbows back to starting position.
3. Repeat 8 times to start and build up to 16 to 24 reps.
4. Do at least 2 sets.

Glute Curl

1. Lie flat on a mat or a well-cushioned floor/carpet. Place the exercise ball under your feet. Put both your feet on top and roll it until your heels are digging into the top of it. (You can do this with sneakers on or with bare feet.)
2. Place your hands at your sides flat on the floor or the mat for support. With your heels, roll the ball till you are raising your butt slightly off the ground (your back should remain mostly on the ground though). You should feel this in your hamstrings, quads, and glutes for sure! As with all the other exercises, start slowly and do this in smooth, controlled movements.
3. Start with 8 reps and build up to 25 or 30.
4. Try to do at least 2 sets.

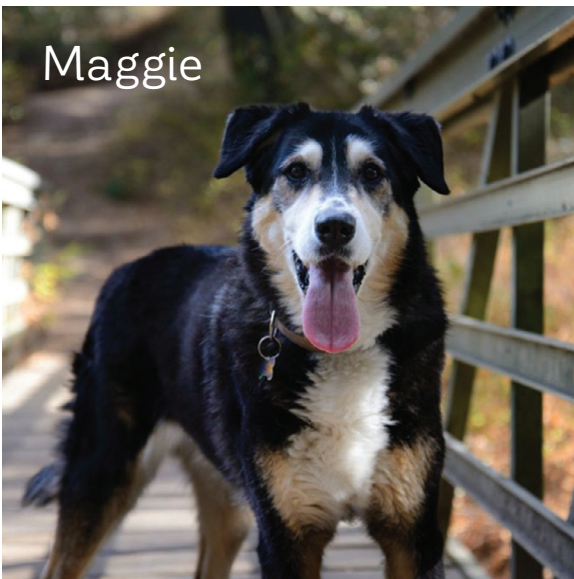




Ernest



The Joys of My Life: Music, Gardening & Furry Friends



Maggie



Jake & Jessie



Avocado Mousse
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Creamy Mushroom Pasta

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Gazpacho

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Ginger Beets

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Strawberry Trifle

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