



Featured Recipes

Lentil Soup

by Heather McDougall

This soup is a favorite of my boys and so easy to make. I think one of the reasons they like it, is because I chop all of the vegetables really small. And, like most of the soups I make, if you don't have an ingredient, such as carrot or kale, leave it out or substitute another favorite ingredient.

2 small onions, finely chopped
 2 carrots, finely chopped
 6 small white potatoes, finely chopped
 1 16-ounce bag brown lentils
 1 16-ounce can fire roasted tomatoes, diced
 8 cups vegetable broth or water
 1-2 cups finely chopped spinach
 salt to taste

Combine all ingredients, except the spinach, and cook on low for 2 hours. Add the spinach about 10 minutes before the soup is done.



Pimento Cheese-Style Hummus

by Susan Voisen

FatFreeVegan.com

Years ago, I was making red pepper hummus at my parents' house when my mother asked for a taste. "Hmmm," she said. "It's sort of like pimento cheese." Now, I don't know if that was a good thing to her or not; we'd never had pimento cheese in the house when I

was growing up, so I assume it wasn't one of her favorites. But I kept that comparison tucked away in the back pocket of my mind with the goal of someday working on a vegan pimento cheese recipe. It took randomly spotting a pimento cheese photo on Pinterest to remind me to do some experimenting.

For the uninitiated, pimento cheese is a common filling for sandwiches and spread for crackers in the Southern U.S. It's made by grating various cheeses and mixing them with mayo (or cream cheese), seasonings, and pimentos—you know, those little red peppers stuffed into green olives. (Here in the South, at least, you can buy jars of pimentos in the same section of the grocery store as olives, but if they're not available, you can substitute minced roasted red peppers, which I find actually have more flavor.) It's the kind of old-fashioned Southern dish that always seems to show up at potlucks and picnics. I developed a fondness for it in college, where a deli container of the lumpy, orange spread and a loaf of bread were all I needed to get me through the penniless days before my work-study check came in.



©FatFreeVegan.com

Pimento cheese has the amazing ability to be two textures at the same time. The mayo or cream cheese base provides smoothness, but the cheese itself is not melted or blended so that its texture remains, well, lumpy. To give my pimento cheese-style hummus a similar texture, I decided to use silken tofu for the smoothness and blend it in two stages—once to puree the tofu and half the chickpeas and cashews and then again in just short pulses of the processor to break the remaining chick peas and cashews into al dente bits. I added nutritional yeast and plenty of seasonings to give it that cheesy flavor, and then I refrigerated it for a while to allow the flavors to blend.



And...success! I liked it, and it was definitely reminiscent of the pimento cheese of my youth. But I was worried a little when daughter E wanted to try it. She's never tasted pimento cheese and generally doesn't like it when I tinker with foods she likes, like hummus. She came in at the end of my photo shoot and asked to try it on one of the pieces of French bread I'd had been using in the shot. One piece turned into two, and then she had the idea to make a little Vine video of the disappearing hummus. Somehow that 6-second video took several takes to shoot, and she wound up eating every piece of French bread. So I would say this recipe is an unqualified kid-friendly success.

For a soy-free option, try using a couple of tablespoons of almond or rice milk instead of the silken tofu.

Ingredients

1/3 cup cashews

1 1/2 cups cooked, drained chickpeas, divided

3 ounces silken tofu (1/4 package MoriNu brand)

6 tablespoons pimentos (about 4 ounces), drained well, divided

3 tablespoons nutritional yeast

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon spicy brown mustard

1/2 teaspoon granulated onion

1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika

1/4 teaspoon cayenne (red) pepper (or to taste)

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste (use less if chickpeas are salted)

Instructions

Place the cashews in a small bowl and cover them with water. Allow them to soak at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

Drain the cashews. Put half of them into the food processor along with half of the chickpeas, the silken tofu, 4 tablespoons pimentos, and all remaining ingredients. Process until it's as smooth as you can get it. Then add the remaining cashews and chickpeas and pulse about 10 times until chickpeas and cashews are broken but not completely smooth.

Check seasonings and add more red pepper and salt to taste. Transfer into a serving bowl and stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons of pimentos. Refrigerate for at least an hour to allow flavors to blend.

Preparation time: 10 minute(s) | Cooking (blending) time: 2 minute(s)

Number of servings (yield): 6

Mac & Casheese

by Katie Mae, MS

I think it's safe to say everyone loves a warm, creamy Mac and Cheese. I know I do, if it's vegan of course. This American favorite is traditionally made with butter, milk and cheese, which is unnecessarily rich. This tasty alternative is made creamy and cheesy with cashews and nutritional yeast. Plus I threw in some nutrient-dense veggies to add even more color, texture and flavor. Enjoy!

Ingredients

16 ounces macaroni (preferably brown rice or quinoa-based noodles)



2 cups broccoli, chopped
 1½ cups peas
 1 cup water
 ¾ cup nutritional yeast
 ½ cup cashew powder (just ground-up cashews)
 1½ tablespoons tahini, salt-free preferred
 ½ lemon, juiced
 1 teaspoon turmeric
 ½ teaspoon garlic granules
 1-2 teaspoon mellow white miso (optional)
 Freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions



Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and set pasta aside in original saucepan. In a separate medium saucepan, steam broccoli by placing 1 to 2 inches of water on bottom, a steam basket on top, and broccoli in the basket. Cover with lid slightly ajar and cook over medium heat for several minutes, or until desired softness is reached. Place peas in a small bowl and set aside.

Place all remaining ingredients in a blender and blend until sauce has a creamy consistency. Place pasta saucepan (containing pasta) over low heat. Fold sauce into pasta. Add broccoli and peas and stir well. Let cook for just a few minutes to allow flavors to marry. Sprinkle with black pepper and serve hot.

Makes 4-6 servings

BBQ Beans and Greens

Seeing that I have a major sweet tooth, it's no surprise that I'm a huge fan of BBQ sauce. I especially love BBQ veggie pizza, BBQ tempeh, and my newest creation - BBQ Beans and Greens! Pineapple, the key ingredient, adds a perfectly sweet dynamic. If you enjoy the tangy, sweetness of BBQ sauce but prefer to skip the heavy salt and sugar added to store-bought BBQ sauces, you must try this recipe!

Ingredients

1 small yellow onion, diced
 1½ teaspoon garlic granules
 1 large bunch of kale, de-stemmed chopped (any type)
 1½ cup cooked cannellini beans (1 can, no salt-added, rinsed and drained)
 1½ cup cooked pinto beans (1 can, no salt-added, rinsed and drained)

BBQ Sauce

¾ cup warm water
 5 dates, pitted
 6 ounce can of tomato paste
 ½ cup pineapple
 ½ cup pineapple juice
 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
 2 teaspoons chili powder (or chipotle spice)
 1 teaspoon onion powder



Directions

* Directions for Baked Beans at the bottom of this recipe

In a food processor or blender, combine BBQ sauce ingredients. Blend to even consistency and set aside.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, place onions and cook with lid on, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes until onions are translucent. With a lid on pan the water that sweats out from onions is kept in pan, and thus there is no need to start with water or oil. Add garlic and cook for another 2 minutes.

Add the beans and chopped kale to the onions. Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally. If mixture is too dry, add less than 1/4 cup of water. Add the BBQ sauce to the beans and greens. Gently toss mixture so everything is covered with sauce. Cook on low for 5-10 minutes to incorporate the flavors and then serve.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

*For Baked Beans:

Preheat the oven to 375. In a food processor or blender, combine BBQ sauce ingredients and blend to an even consistency. Set aside.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, place onions and cook with lid on, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes until onions are translucent. With a lid on pan the water that sweats out from onions is kept in pan, and thus there is no need to start with water or oil. Add garlic and cook for another 2 minutes.

Add the beans and chopped kale to the onions. Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally. If mixture is too dry, add less than 1/4 cup of water. Add the BBQ sauce to the beans and greens. Gently toss mixture so everything is covered with sauce. Pour mixture into a 9x13 inch casserole dish. Cover and bake for 30 minutes.

Sweet Potato Tacos

This recipe is one of my favorites, mainly because of how delicious it is and how quickly it can be put together. Variations are so easy to incorporate that you'll never get bored. You can substitute with different starches, greens, spices, salsas, and avocado... the combinations are endless!

Ingredients



6 sweet potatoes
3 cups black beans, cooked
1 tablespoon cumin, ground
½ tablespoon coriander, ground
¼ teaspoon chili powder
1 bunch collards
12 corn tortillas, oil-free

Topping Options: Heirloom Tomato Salsa, Guacamole, or Onion Cashew Cream

Directions

Fill a large pot with 1-2 inches of water and put a steamer in the pot. Cover with lid and bring water to a boil. Chop sweet potatoes into small chunks and place in the steamer. As the sweet potatoes cook, warm the black beans on the stove at low-medium heat. Add cumin, coriander, and chili powder to the beans. Stir occasionally. If beans start to stick to the bottom of the pan add water as needed.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lay tortillas out on a cookie sheet, preferably in a single layer. If you'd like to, place parchment paper on cookie sheet before laying tortillas. The quickest option would be to put tortillas right on the oven rack.

Chop collards into strips. When the sweet potatoes are soft enough to break apart with a fork, use tongs to take them out of the

pot and into a serving bowl. Place the collards into the steamer. They should only take 1-2 minutes to cook. At this time, the tortillas can be put in the oven to be warmed up.

While the greens are cooking, use a potato masher or a fork to mash the sweet potatoes. When greens are soft and vibrant green, transfer them to a bowl. Check the tortillas and when ready take them out of the oven and onto a plate. Pour black beans into a bowl. After laying out the tortillas, sweet potatoes, and fixings, invite everyone to make their own tacos.

Makes 12 tacos

Banana Blueberry Bars



This tasty bar is perfect for breakfast, a snack, or dessert. It's full of healthy starch to give you lasting energy, unrefined sugars for sweetness, fiber for good digestion, and even omega-3s for your heart and brain. Its easy have a delicious treat and support your body at the same time!

Ingredients

- 1 cup dates, pitted and halved
- 1½ cups apple juice
- 1 cup oat flour
- 2 cups rolled oats
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 3 bananas, peeled
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup fresh blueberries (frozen also works)
- ½ cup walnuts

Directions

In a small bowl, soak dates in apple juice for 10-15 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lay a piece of parchment paper in a 9 x 9-inch baking pan, making sure the sides are covered. Cut slits in the corners of the paper so that the paper overlaps and is flat. In a medium bowl, combine flour, oats, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Mix and set aside. Place bananas and vanilla extract into a blender. Remove dates from apple juice and set aside. Add the strained juice to the blender and blend until creamy. Add dates to the blender and pulse a few times until the dates are in small pieces. Pour the banana mixture into the dry ingredient bowl. Mix until well combined. Stir in the blueberries and walnuts. Using a spatula, pour the batter into baking pan. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool at room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

Yields 12 bars

Katie Mae is a nutritionist and Co-Founder of [Sprout'd](http://www.sproutd.com), an online women's wellness center. Sprout'd offers plant-based nutrition consultations, culinary workshops, and recipes free of refined sugar, oil and gluten. Katie is a culinary instructor at True North Health Center, works with Dr. McDougall's Health and Medical Center and is the Nutrition Educator at Sonoma State University. She holds a Masters degree in Nutrition from Bastyr University. To contact Katie and see more recipes [click here](http://www.sproutd.com).