

Meals for Mere Mortals

a collection of vegan recipes

by Zacchary Bird





Introduction

Greetings mere mortals,

Thank you for downloading the collection of my favourite crowd-pleasing recipes and cooking tips (plus a few crowd-alarming dishes, too). This book is a product of years of recipe development, catering and cooking for mortals of all kinds: *Meals for Mere Mortals*.

If you are a mere mortal, this book is perfect for you. The dishes are tried and tested by hundreds of mortals, most of them people – *just like you!* Even better, this book is completely mortal free, so you’re not on the menu and neither is anyone else. All references to animal products are to the vegan version of these ingredients and dishes. I recommend reading the Ingredient Guide thoroughly: there’s lots of tips and tricks I think you ought to know about. There’s a few attempted jokes in there too, but don’t worry – my jokes are like my toilet paper. 100% recycled.

There should be something for everyone in this book as the recipes range from comforting, nostalgic, exciting to just a little disturbing – even the non-mortals are accounted for with some mythical meat recipes included, too. I’ve discovered that vegan food has no limits for what it can achieve, and I’m so excited for you to enjoy this book as much as I did creating it. Find me on Facebook or Instagram with any questions or to show me what you make! If you enjoy these recipes, check out my cookbook “Vegan Junk Food” which is available worldwide.

Cheers,
Zacchary Bird (@zaccharybird)

Index

DIPS AND SAUCES

Mayonnaise 011-012

Aioli 011

Tartare Sauce 011

Hemp Seed Hummus 013

Baba Ganoush 014

Kale Chip Pesto 015

Lemon Pesto 018

Cheese Sauce 019

Okonomi Sauce 065

Caesar Dressing 075

GUIDES

Deep Frying Guide 005 - 008

Gluten Free Guide 009- 010

Ingredient Guide 081 - 094

SNACKS, SIDES & STARTERS

Mediterranean Pasta Salad 018

French Onion Soup 023 - 024

Curried Broccoli &

Almond Butter Soup 025

Potato Flatbread 028

Quinoa Tabbouleh 029

Avocado and Tomato Salmon Salad 032

Salt and Pepper Tofu 033

Burmese Tofu 035

Rice Paper Hacks 037 - 038

Greek Salad 049

Yellow Rice 025

Fried Rice 091

BONUS CLASSIFIED SECTION

Unicorn Steak - ∞

Mermaid Tail - ∞

MAINS

Quiche 039 - 044

Spanakopita 047 - 049

Puttanesca 052

Eggplant Parmigiana 053 - 054

Lasagne 055 - 058

Mac and Cheese 059

Fried Mac and Cheese Balls 059

Falafel 061

West African Peanut Stew 062

Kakiage 064

Okonomiyaki 065

FAUX MEAT

Tomato Salmon 032

Rice Paper Bacon 038

Sausage Rolls 050

CFC Drumsticks 067 - 070

Southern Fried Cauliflower - 071

Jackfruit Karaage 071

CFCaesar 073 - 076

Beer Battered Banana Blossom 078

Tarantula 079

Deep Frying Guide

Deep frying is cooking food in enough hot oil so that it can swim around in it, just like the idea behind boiling food. Often batters, flouring or breadcrumbs are employed to create a crispy barrier between the oil and the fried food. The goal is to have the exterior (crispy) and interior (cooked through) ready at the same time.

CHOOSING OIL

Pick an oil with a high smoke point as you'll be frying at high temperatures. Rapeseed, sunflower, vegetable, peanut or canola oil are all great choices.

As we can reuse oil to fry several batches of food, the oil takes on changes each time we use it. There is flavour difference between two of the same dish fried in the same oil after a first and after many uses. Oil in peak condition (unused) will make for a less oily end product as the bubbles streaming from the food push the oil away.

The older your frying oil, the greasier the end product. 'Broken in' oil, which has been used before, creates less bubbles to push the oil away from the food. The water in the food mixes more easily with the oil and so more time is spent with the food surface in contact with oil. This means it will cook quicker and brown faster. To reuse oil after frying, just strain and store it. You'll notice the flavour and colour changes gradually over many uses, and it should become clear when to swap over to a fresh batch of oil.

TEMPERATURE

Using room temperature ingredients makes for the least fluctuation in temperature when adding them to the oil. Some ingredients, however, benefit from being frozen prior to frying to avoid cooking them very much and to preserve texture. For example, freezing chocolate bars before battering and frying them stops the filling from melting into a hot liquid and results in a warm chocolate bar by the time the batter is cooked through.

The lower the heat of your oil, the more risk that oil will seep into your food. Higher temperatures mean the surface of the food cooks instantly, and the resulting seal stops oil from penetrating the interior. Inside the food, any moisture is converted to steam - cooking internally. The bubbles produced by this is the moisture evaporating. Because of this the heat is reduced considerably around the surface of the food so the effective cooking temperature is less than the oil heat.

TEMPERATURE GUIDE

The most common ideal temperature zone within which to fry food is between 178c to 190c. Above 200c becomes dangerous and should be avoided, as from this heat the oil will begin to smoke and risk an oil fire. When using a deep-fry thermometer, aim for around 180c. Hot chips should be cooked at a slightly higher temperature - 190c.

Less precise ways of testing whether or not your oil is hot enough include:

Salt: Add a pinch of salt, if it sizzles then your oil should be ready for frying.

Bread and a timer: Place a cube of bread into the oil, and if it bubbles and turns the bread golden-brown within 40-60 seconds, the oil is ready to fry. Stale bread will brown a lot quicker, so use fresh.

Wood: Dip a wooden chopstick, the handle of a wooden spoon, or (if you are a pirate) your pegleg into the centre of the oil. If it begins vigorously bubbling then you're ready to fry.

Deep Frying Guide *continued*

BATTERS AND FLOURING

Batter and flouring forms an effective seal between the food and the oil, creating the different textures in one deep-fried dish. It's much easier to add spices, salts and flavours to the batter or flouring of a dish than to try to add it afterwards.

Wet batter is appropriate for delicate dishes or food you don't want to over-cook. Because the water in the batter will steadily boil, it'll keep the internal temperature cooler for a browned crust without overcooking the inside. Alcohol in batter further reduces the internal temperature.

Adding a leavener (baking powder) to batter makes for crispier crusts as the reaction creates carbon dioxide bubbles. Beer and fresh soda work in batter if used quickly to capitalise on the bubbles.

When deep-frying something that doesn't have a dry exterior or batter, we can use seasoned flour or breadcrumbs to create that seal. To hold the dry material to the food, traditionally egg would be used - however aquafaba does the trick perfectly.

WHILE FRYING

Turn the food occasionally for even browning and to avoid pieces getting stuck together. Avoid too much moving as you can pierce the seal.

Don't overcrowd the pot. Frequently remove floating extras as they'll continue to crisp and get mixed up with your other pieces frying.

Tongs can lead to piercing the surface of the food so be wary or use a slotted spoon/frying tool. Or, if you have a metal hook to match the pegleg, this could work too.

AFTER FRYING

Between maintaining the right frying temperature and absorbing the surface oil after removing from the oil, we have a great deal of control over how much oil ends up in the final dish.

The majority of the oil that can be absorbed by the surface of the food happens after it is removed from the fryer - hence blotting/setting on a paper towel. It's important to not blot all the oil away, as removing it all would remove the mouthfeel and texture.

SAFETY

Don't overfill the pot with oil (aim for half-full or less), and don't overfill the oil with food to fry.

Avoid moisture and wetness coming into contact with the oil as it'll start spluttering. This is why ingredients that go in unadulterated must be patted dry thoroughly (like chips) or are dusted with flour/flour and breadcrumbs.

If you ever have an oil fire, turn off the heat and cover it with a lid or baking tray. Do not ever add water to an oil fire or you will exacerbate it.

Once cooled, dispose of your oil in the same package you got it in.

Gluten Free Guide

All recipes in this ebook are already gluten free as described, or by replacing any reference to flour with all purpose gluten free flour, except for the ones listed below. For those, I've added notes on how to adapt these.

Mediterranean Pasta Salad (Page 018)

Choose a GF version of pasta and you're set.

Cheese Sauce (Page 019)

Plain flour can be substituted 1:1 with a standard GF blend, or with glutinous rice flour..

French Onion Soup (Page 023 - 024)

Flour can be substituted or left out entirely. Choose GF versions of worcestershire sauce and vegemite (readily available). Either serve the soup as is, or if you can get your hands on GF bread that doesn't use egg white then replace the bread called for with it.

Tomato Salmon (Page 032)

Choose a GF soy sauce or tamari to make this recipe.

Rice Paper Bacon (Page 038)

Choose a GF soy sauce or tamari to make this recipe.

Quiche (Page 039)

Go crustless and bake for a longer duration. Or for a quick potato crust: grate, rinse and squeeze dry 500g potato and mix with 3 tablespoons rice flour, salt and pepper. Press into your baking dish to form a crust and pre-bake for 10 minutes before adding in the filling.

Spanakopita (Page 047 - 049)

The filling is gluten free, but you'll be hard pressed to find gluten free phyllo. GF puff pastry makes for an acceptable but noticeably poorer alternative.

Sausage Rolls (Page 50)

Make sure your faux meat is GF and opt for GF puff pastry for this recipe. Check your soy and worcestershire sauces to make sure they're GF, too.

Puttanesca (Page 052)

Grab gluten free pasta and that's all the substitutions you'll need to make.

Eggplant Parmigiana (Page 053 - 054)

GF all-purpose flour and breadcrumbs will do the trick here, but if you can find the extra crispy form of GF breadcrumbs then definitely do grab them.

Lasagne (Page 055 - 058)

Make sure your faux meat is GF and opt for GF lasagne sheets for this recipe. When making the cheese sauce, use **Glutinous Rice Flour** (Page 086).

Fried Mac and Cheese Balls (Page 059)

Choose a GF version of pasta, breadcrumbs and flour - readily available brands will do the job.

Okonomiyaki Sauce (Page 065)

Check your worcestershire to make sure it's both vegan and gluten free.

CFCaesar Salad (Page 075 - 076)

Skip the croutons and chicken, or if you're in Australia: Unreal Co chicken is gluten free.

Tarantula (Page 079)

Choose a GF chicken (avoid seitan based)

Frying

All-purpose gluten free flour will be fine to use to flour fried recipes, but you should note that many flour blends won't brown up in the same way normal flour would. Often this means the food will be fully cooked, but the exterior will be almost bone white whilst still crispy. Use your spoon or spatula to test the crispness of the surface to decide when gluten free fried foods are done.

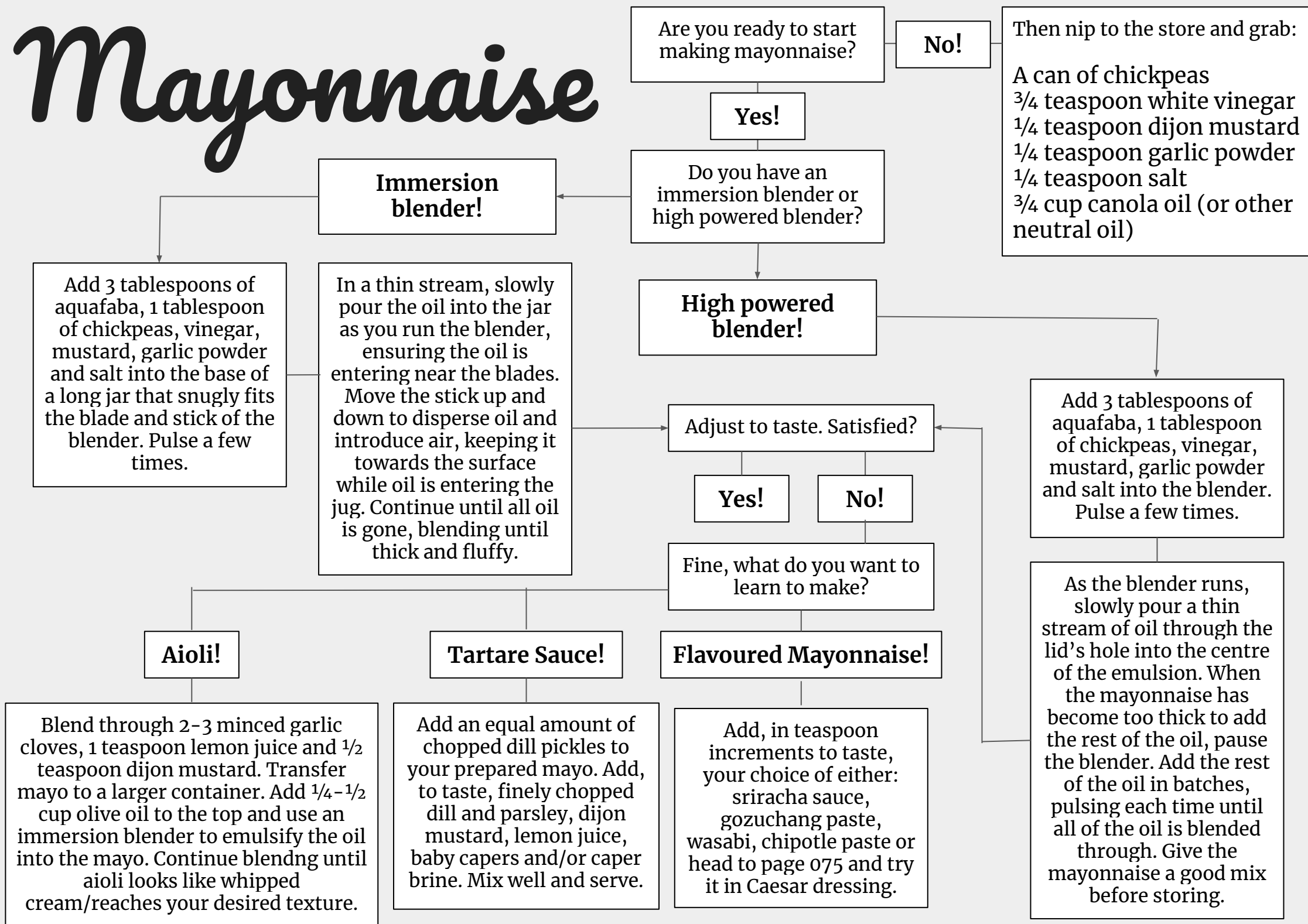
Sauces

Glutinous rice flour, generally used for asian desserts, is gluten free and can be used to make a roux. It takes a bit more work to avoid clumping, but the end product is a great base for gravies and sauces.

Store-bought Alternatives

Many ingredients called for in these recipes have readily-available gluten free alternatives. However, you should watch out for the inclusion of egg or egg white as an ingredient in some of their ingredient lists, especially: breads, frozen pastry sheets and fresh pasta/noodles. Look out for milk solids, too, just because it's always hidden in an ingredients list anyway.

Mayonnaise





Hemp Seed Hummus

Ingredients

1/2 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup hemp seeds
1/3-1/2 cup hulled tahini
1/2 tablespoon salt
1 + 1/2 teaspoon hot paprika
1/2 teaspoon cumin
2 fat cloves of garlic
3 cans of chickpeas (400g)
(reserve 1/2 cup aquafaba)

ZAC'S TIP: For a twist to this recipe, boil a large beetroot for 45 minutes and remove the skin. Add the skinned beetroot the recipe as you add the chickpeas to make Beetroot Hummus.

Method

1. Add hemp seeds to a food processor with 1/3 cup of tahini and the lemon juice, salt, spices and garlic. Process until a paste is formed.
2. If you're not using hemp seeds, follow the first step but instead use 1/2 cup tahini to form your paste.
3. Add aquafaba, pulsing before adding all of the chickpeas. Process on high for a minute, or longer for a super creamy result.
4. To finish, you can serve this with a pinch of hot or smoked paprika, dukkah, hemp seeds and/or a drizzle of olive oil on top.

'Where do vegans get their protein from?' is a question posed to vegans globally by people who seemingly have yet to discover a supermarket. To appease those worried about vegans succumbing to protein deficiency, adding hemp seeds into the mix can almost double the protein content of your hummus. Here's my easy recipe that will feed you all week long. Alternatively, leave the hemp seeds out and add 2 tablespoons of tahini for a budget friendly hummus.

Baba Ganoush

Method

Ingredients

2 small to medium eggplants
Juice of 1.5 lemons
1 tablespoon tahini
1/3 cup olive oil
Pinch of hot paprika
Pinch of salt
Opt: 6 drops of liquid smoke

1. a) Place whole eggplants under a broiler/oven grill on high for at least an hour, turning with tongs every 15 minutes or so OR
b) Bake whole eggplants at 200 degrees celsius for an hour, before removing with tongs and placing directly over a stovetop flame. Allow to blacken/smoke until the flesh begins to bubble.
2. Once fully incinerated, scrape the flesh of the charred eggplants into a food processor or bowl, avoiding pieces of burnt skin (discard).
3. Follow with all the ingredients except for the liquid smoke. Process on high for about 20 seconds, or give the mixture a hearty stir with a fork if not using a food processor. Taste before adding the liquid smoke if needed. It should now taste so addictively smoky that in future your mouth will water at the sound of a fire alarm.



Kale Chip

Not a fan of kale? Well, it's not very fond of you either!

But if you decide to give it a second chance, make sure to make amends by lathering it in olive oil and salt before baking.

Only then can you harness the full potential of this misunderstood green.

Take a tub of this pesto to the next party you attend and everyone will want to be your friend. Unless you're already vegan and have alienated all of your friends. If so, congratulations! Enjoy your solitude and not having to share.

Ingredients

- 1 large bunch kale
- 1 bunch fresh basil
- 1/2 cup raw cashews
- 1/2 cup olive oil (get the good stuff out for this one)
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Salt

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees celsius.
2. Wash and remove kale leaves from the stems before allowing to dry.
3. Drizzle kale leaves with olive oil and a few good pinches of salt. Massage through and place on a baking tray, making sure the kale isn't crowded so that it can crisp. Bake until the leaves crisp up but before they go dark brown. This can take anywhere from 10- 18 minutes, so keep a close eye on them. Remove and allow to cool before proceeding.
4. Into a food processor, place all ingredients bar the cashews and pulse several times, scraping down the walls of the food processor as needed. Add in the cashews and process until they are blended through, but with visible pieces of cashew still showing. If you would like a runnier consistency, you can add extra olive oil or lemon juice before storing the pesto in the fridge.

015 **ZAC'S NOTE:** Nutritional yeast is called by 'nooch' by some, and 'hippie dust' by nobody but Wikipedia. It can mimic the flavour of parmesan, although it isn't able to replicate the digestive issues of the original.

Pesto





Ingredients

250g macaroni pasta
3-4 tablespoons lemon, kale or
classic pesto
3-5 cloves garlic
1 ripe avocado
150g brussels sprouts
100g sun-dried tomatoes
1 cup sliced mushrooms
Opt: 1/3 cup shredded cheese,
dairy free feta, black or green
olives, marinated artichokes,
charred red capsicum, charred
asparagus spears, whatever
you've got on hand, etc.

Method

1. Prepare brussels sprouts, sun-dried tomatoes, mushrooms with garlic and your chosen additional ingredients as per the **Ingredient Guide**.
2. Prepare macaroni as per packet instructions and drain.
3. Add prepared vegetables. If using cheese, toss this in now and bake in a baking dish until starting to melt.
4. Dice avocado and toss through the pasta with the pesto. Serve, with any leftover pesto on top.

Oil Free Lemon Pesto

Ingredients

4 cups basil (6 bunches)
4 cloves garlic
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup raw cashews
1/4 cup nutritional yeast
Salt to taste

Method

Combine all ingredients in a food processor. Use on crackers, in pasta, as garnish or however you enjoy using pesto.

Cheese Sauce

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or dairy free butter
- 3 tablespoons sifted plain flour
- 2 1/4 (or so) cups soy milk
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast if using cheese
(or 1/2 cup if not)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- Opt: 1 tablespoon Japanese mayonnaise
- Opt: 1.5 cup shredded cheese

Method

1. Heat the fat in a large pan until it bubbles before sifting in the flour. Stir constantly for a minute or two over medium heat - you want the raw flour to cook through and the roux to start to bubble.
2. Gradually whisk in the soy milk in small increments, allowing all the liquid to be absorbed by the flour until adding more. When all the liquid is added, let the roux simmer for several minutes over low heat to thicken. Stir frequently.
3. Stir through nutritional yeast, mayonnaise, garlic and mustard. If the sauce is thickening too much already, add more soy milk.
4. If using cheese, stir it in and allow the roux to simmer for 10-15 minutes longer. You'll know it's done when it is thick enough for the sauce to come away from the sides of the pan. It will continue to thicken once you remove it from the heat. Serve in and on pasta dishes, or close your curtains and simply chug it from the pan.

ZAC'S NOTE: Using shredded cheese in this sauce creates a thicker texture and provides cheesy flavour in a way that the other ingredients don't impart thanks to the commercial flavours available to vegan cheese manufacturers. Simply put, the more cash you splash on cheese to melt into this sauce, the better the final product.

Mortal, Eddie, from Edgar's Mission
Animal Sanctuary with
Spanakopita (page 047 - 048),
Pesto Quiche (page 043 - 044),
Sausage Rolls (page 050) and me.





French Onion Soup

021

022

French Onion Soup

Method

Good French Onion Soup is a labour of love. The very best broths come from hours of caramelising the onions slowly. If you can, choose a variety of onions (shallots/red/brown/sweet). This dish is a perfect entrée because there's a lot of passive cooking time where you can work on other dishes as you wait for the onions to transform into that caramelised sludge that makes this soup so good.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
1kg mixed red and brown onions
1/2 cup dry white wine or 1/4 cup dry sherry
2 tablespoons flour (optional)
4 sprigs of fresh thyme
2 bay leaves
1.25L beef stock
1.5 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons vegemite
1.5 teaspoons worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon salt
Pinch pepper
1 loaf french bread
Shredded cheese
1/2 bunch chives

1. Start by slicing the onions. They will be cooked down considerably, so there's no need to chop them too finely. Place olive oil and onions into a deep pot over the lowest possible heat. Stir frequently for 20–30 minutes.
2. Increase heat slightly (still less than medium heat) and add a pinch of salt. Wait for the onions to start to brown and catch on the bottom of the pot before scraping this all up, stirring the onions well and repeating once they catch again.
3. As you do this, you'll gradually notice the hue of the onions transform to a rich brown colour. It will take from 30 to 90 minutes (if you've increased the batch size) to achieve this. Once you complete this dish a few times, the changing scent will also be an indicator of when the onions are done caramelising.
4. If using flour, throw it in and stir for 1–2 minutes to cook out the raw flavour. Increase heat to high and add the white wine, stirring as the liquid bubbles for a minute to pick up all the flavours that have caught on the bottom of the pan (or for fancy folk: *deglaze*).
5. Add thyme and bay leaves. Follow with stock, balsamic vinegar, vegemite and worcestershire sauce. Once the soup starts to bubble, reduce to low and simmer for at least 30 minutes, or if you're able to leave it simmer for longer then definitely do so! This soup becomes richer the longer the onions are allowed to meld with the liquid.
6. Grill a few thick slices of french bread with cheese on top. You can serve these on the side, or (even better) drop them into the bowl before ladling the soup on top and adding extra melted cheese. Top with fresh chives for the sake of adding something green into this incredibly rich and satisfying soup.

ZAC'S TIP: My grandmother always said to treat your onions like you would a lover. Increase the heat ever so gently, check on them often. Project your failures on them and leave in the middle of the night. Years later, when you text them to ask them how they're going and they don't respond – that's how you know they're done.

ZAC'S TIP: You can't start crying whilst chopping onions if you're already crying.

Curried Broccoli & Almond Butter Soup

Ingredients

1 lime
4 green onions
2 green chillies
1kg frozen or fresh broccoli (chopped into pieces and florets)
1 can coconut milk (400ml)
1 can coconut cream (400ml)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup green curry paste
6-8 tablespoons almond butter
4 cups of water
Salt
Milk solids (*just kidding*)

with yellow rice

Serves 6.

Two recipes that take less than 20 minutes apiece, come together to make a delicious meal that takes no effort so you can preserve the little energy a vegan diet provides.

Method

1. Finely chop green onions and chillies.
2. In a medium to large pot on medium heat, fry the onion and chillies for two minutes before adding the coconut cream.
3. Once the cream begins to bubble, add the curry paste and stir constantly for about a minute (or until it's fragrant).
4. Add in the broccoli, coconut milk and water and bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, reduce to low and allow to simmer for 10-15 minutes (depending on whether you're using fresh or frozen broccoli).
5. Zest and juice the lime, adding both into the soup along with the almond butter, mixing well. Add salt to taste.
6. Serve immediately with a side of yellow rice or finish by using an immersion blender for a thicker and creamier soup.

To make yellow rice: bring 1.5 cups of water to the boil with: 1 tablespoon grated ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon minced garlic, 1 tablespoon turmeric powder and 2 cubes of chicken stock. Add 1 cup of washed rice and reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 14-16 minutes. Fluff with a fork once done and serve.

Back: Blended with slivered almonds
Middle: Unblended with green onions
Front: Yellow Rice





Potato Flatbread

Makes 2-3 roti.

Ingredients

1/4 cup boiled and mashed
sweet potato OR
red potato OR
white potato OR
a mixture of red and white
potato
1/4 cup + 3 tablespoons plain flour
Salt
Oil
Optional, if using sweet potato:
1/2 teaspoon nigella seeds

This recipe works with most potatoes. Sweet potato packs in lots of flavour, red potato makes for sturdy flatbread and white potato creates an impossibly fluffy final flatbread. A combination of red and white potato works very well, and is a great excuse to get rid of those sad last potatoes waiting to be used up before they grow eyes large enough to start giving you evils.

Method

1. Take 3 tablespoons of flour and sprinkle over a surface suitable for rolling and dust a rolling pin. In a large bowl, mix 1/4 cup flour, salt and the nigella seeds (or your choice of herbs or garlic!). Add the mashed vegetable you've chosen.
2. Begin mixing with a spoon until the mixture begins to come together and becomes easier to work with your hands. Work the mashed vegetables into a ball, cover in flour and punch down/fold over the dough repeatedly to incorporate all of the flour. Move the ball to your floured surface.
3. Use the rolling pin to roll out the dough, flip over and repeat. You'll need dust the surface and rolling pin each time you flip the flatbread. If, as you roll, the flatbread breaks apart or has unincorporated mashed veg - this is easily fixed. Heartily sprinkle flour over it, fold the flatbread over and roll out again. Continue until you achieve your desired flatbread shape/size.
4. Heat a small amount of oil in a large pan or spray both sides of the flatbread with cooking spray (make sure oil reaches the entire surface either way). Fry on each side for 1-2 minutes (until all flour is cooked through and the bread begins to get brown spots). Serve immediately or keep covered in a kitchen towel. Serve warm.

Quinoa Tabbouleh

Hemp Seed Hummus (Page 013)
Falafel (Page 061)

Tabbouleh is normally made with bulgur wheat as the grain, but when we substitute this for cooked quinoa, the dish becomes gluten free. Plus you're far more likely to have uses for a leftover bag of quinoa than you are bulgur wheat, so I always opt for it. Adding in some allspice takes this salad from simple to moreish. This tabbouleh goes well on Potato Flatbread (previous page), Hemp Seed Hummus (page 013) and Falafel (page 061).

Ingredients

- 1/2 bunch of green onion
- 3 bunches of flat leaf parsley
- 2 bunches of mint
- 6 ripe tomatoes
- 1 cup of dry quinoa
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice

Method

1. Wash all herbs and set aside to dry.
2. Rinse quinoa well to remove bitterness, and put into a small pan with two cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook for 15-20 minutes (until most of the water is absorbed). Fluff the quinoa with a fork and set aside to cool.
3. Finely chop the parsley, mint, green onions and tomatoes. Mix in a large bowl.
4. Add in quinoa, allspice and salt. Mix again.
5. Pour over lemon juice and mix one last time. You're done!





Tomato Salmon

This super quick tomato dish does a great job replacing salmon in many applications: in sushi, on bagels, in salad. It's quicker, easier and in my opinion better than the attempts at using carrot to replace salmon. These are essentially marinated tomatoes, so feel free to mix and match the ingredients that you add to the marinade.

For a quick salad idea, layer the prepared tomato pieces with a small, sliced avocado (as pictured). Pour over a mixture of strained passionfruit (1 tablespoon), lime juice (1 tablespoon), caster sugar (1 teaspoon), plus salt and pepper to taste before topping with chopped chilli and coriander.

Ingredients

3 medium sized tomatoes
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons ginger powder
1/2 teaspoon liquid smoke
2 sheets of nori seaweed

Method

1. Pluck the stem from the tomato and make two shallow incisions on the top to create a cross. Place tomatoes into boiling water for a maximum 60 seconds, remove and plunge into ice cold water. This means you can easily remove the skin whilst keeping the raw texture we want for this dish
2. Cut tomatoes into quarters or thirds (depending on tomato size and desired size of pieces). Use your finger to remove the seeds and liquid, leaving only the core and firm flesh. Pat dry.
3. Chop the seaweed into shreds and place in hot water for a minute to hydrate. Drain and add these to all other ingredients before adding the prepared tomato. Marinate for at least an hour and remove from marinade to serve.

Salt & Pepper Tofu

Ingredients

- 1 block tofu (300g-500g)*
- 1/2 cup cornflour
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

*Choosing your tofu type:

SILKEN	NORMAL	FIRM	BURMESE
Super crispy exterior and melty interior. Creates unique shapes. Great with a squeeze of lemon	Classic exterior and pillowy interior. Most pronounced tofu flavour.	Hardest texture with chewy interior. Resembles a nugget.	Classic exterior and soft interior. Close to normal tofu, but can be slightly grainy depending on how you prepared it.

Method

ZAC'S NOTE: Freeze your tofu overnight, and pop it in boiling water before using. This process expands the water pockets in the tofu, setting it up to absorb flavour even better and leaving a much denser final product.

- If using regular or firm tofu, wrap it in a paper towel and set a *heavy* weight on top for 20 minutes to squeeze out extra moisture. Skip this step if using silken or burmese tofu.
- Preheat a pan for shallow frying (see tips on **Deep Frying Guide**). Ideally, you want the oil to be deep enough for half of each tofu cube to be able to be immersed in the oil.
- Cut tofu into cubes. If using silken tofu, just tear off hunks of it out as you need to instead of trying to cube it.
- Mix cornflour, salt and pepper together in a small bowl. Use chopsticks (or your fingers if you're a grub) to dip each tofu cube into the seasoned cornflour. Coat all cubes on all sides. Place the tofu cubes in the oil with plenty of personal space for each one. Avoid allowing too much time between flouring the tofu and putting the cubes in the oil so that moisture doesn't seep out and ruin the coating.
- Fry, flipping around occasionally until crispy on all sides (5 - 10 minutes). Serve with dipping sauce.

Back: Fresh Burmese Tofu
Front: Salt and Pepper Tofu



Burmese Tofu

Chickpeas have invaded the territory of eggs and flour, stealing all their jobs when being used in recipes. Now, they're coming for the soybean's relationship with tofu.

Whilst I still prefer classic tofu to this kind, the fact that it takes five minutes of effort and cents worth of ingredients means I'm sure it will be on regular rotation in your refrigerator.

Ingredients

1 cup chickpea flour
1 teaspoon salt
(or two cubes of vegetable stock)
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon olive oil
3 cups of water

Method

1. Blend all ingredients with one cup of water.
2. Bring the remaining 2 cups of water to a rolling boil. It's important that the water is boiling and not just hot before moving on to the next step.
3. Pour the blended mixture into the boiling water and immediately turn off the heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon for at least 5 minutes. The mixture is ready once it achieves a glossy appearance. If this isn't happening, turn the stovetop back on to a low heat as you stir and it will gloss right up. If you're not sure, give it a taste. Undercooked chickpea flour tastes like satan's armpit so you'll know if it's not quite done yet.
4. Prepare a container for the tofu. Choose a rectangular container to achieve a block of tofu similar to the shape you find in-store, or use large ice cube trays for ready to go cubes.
5. Pour the mixture into the container and allow to return to room temperature before refrigerating for at least an hour. This can be served raw in salads or used in place of regular-to-firm tofu in most recipes.



Microwaved
Rice Paper



Deep Fried
Rice Paper



Pan Fried
Rice Paper Bacon



Deep Fried
Rice Paper Bacon



Rice Paper Hacks

Instant Rice Crackers: Forgot to grab crackers but you just want to demolish a bowl of hummus? This trick is stupidly simple, and whilst it doesn't pack a tonne of flavour, it's the quickest way to make a healthy cracker to load flavour onto.

Grab a piece of rice paper. Before you start, clean your microwave tray. I'll bet you needed to, anyway. Use kitchen scissors to trim a piece of rice paper into smaller circles, either one larger (but not whole piece of paper) or 2-3 smaller circles will work. Place **WITHOUT A PLATE** into the microwave and blast for 30 seconds, give or take depending on the size of the cracker. Most plates will absorb the heat and simply give you a hot piece of rice paper.

As it microwaves, you'll notice it turn opaque white and puff up. View the page prior for a visual example. If there are parts of the cracker that haven't puffed up, blast for longer or simply tear this off easily. You're done!

One Minute Papadums: These are much softer and flavoursome than their microwaved counterparts. The texture is lovely and you're able to adapt it into any (albeit-blob like) shape you like!

Prepare a large pot of oil for deep frying (See **Deep Frying Guide**). The papadums will absorb any flavour in the oil, so use a fresh batch if you can. Only when fully hot and bubbling, add a single piece of dry rice paper to the pot. Immediately it will soften and bubble, so use tongs to squash it in lightly to form the shape of your papadum. Within seconds it will be almost crispy, so flip it over for several more seconds. Remove from pan and rest to drain the oil as you add your next piece of rice paper. Repeat until you've got too many to use!

Rice Paper Bacon

Frying rice paper bacon can feel like you're frying condoms, and seeing as it only takes two minutes it's ESPECIALLY like using condoms. The pleasure comes afterwards, though, when you bite into flavoursome bacon that you didn't break a sweat to make.

Ingredients

1/4 cup dark soy sauce
1/4 cup nutritional yeast
2 tablespoons BBQ sauce
1 tablespoon brown sugar
3 teaspoons liquid smoke
3 teaspoons hot paprika
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 teaspoon onion powder
12-18 sheets of rice paper

Method

1. Mix all ingredients except for the rice paper to make a marinade in a bowl that is wide enough to fit your rice paper pieces without bending/snapping them in half. Set up a plate with paper towels to transfer your bacon to once cooked.
2. Grab either one (super crispy), two (medium) or three (chewy and meaty) pieces of rice paper together at the same time and hold under running water for several seconds, coating the inside and outside. You'll notice it becomes flexible very quickly, so you want to work quickly. The rice paper pieces should hold together after being wet and are ready once they are flexible enough to bend. Blot off excess water.
3. Dip the wet rice paper pieces into the marinade, and wipe off any excess so that each side is evenly coated before placing on a plate. Alternatively, use your hands to rub the marinade into each side. If you want it to look like bacon, use scissors to cut it into strips now.
4. Either heat a large pot for deep frying (crispy but less flavoursome) or use cooking spray in a frying pan (chewier and more smoky/flavoursome) over medium heat. See page prior for examples of final results.
Deep Fry: Fry bacon for 20 seconds, using tongs to keep it from curling into a ball and flip halfway through.
Pan Fry: Cook for 1-2 minutes, flipping halfway through or until both sides are bubbling and starting to char.

Rice Paper Parcels: Take a dip or your choice of filling (I love baba ganoush or beetroot hummus) and place in freezer until very cold. Follow the *Rice Paper Bacon* recipe but before pan-frying, add a tablespoon of the cooled dip and fold the rice paper around it to form a parcel. Place in a hot pan, folded side down first and fry on each side until bubbling and starting to char.



Large Quiche shot on
Sea Shepherd's MY Steve Irwin



Quiche

Ingredients

1 cup chickpea flour
1/4 cup nutritional yeast
1 1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons kala namak
2 sheets of dairy free shortcrust pastry

Method

For Mini Quiches:

1. Preheat oven to 220 degrees celsius. Reserve 1 teaspoon kala namak and blend all other ingredients except for the shortcrust pastry.
2. Spray a 12 muffin tray with a light coating of oil. Use the rim of a large cup or mug to cut 12 circles out of the shortcrust pastry. Press each of these into the muffin cups, using your fingers to smooth the pastry into the base and walls.
3. Pour the blended mixture into your crusts and add any fillings you've chosen. Top with shredded cheese if desired. Place the quiche in the oven and reduce the temperature to 200 degrees celsius. Bake for 30 minutes and top with the remaining black salt once removed from the oven.

For a large Quiche, as above but with the following exceptions:

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees celsius and reduce to 220 degrees once you've put the quiche in the oven.
2. For the crust, spray an oven safe dish with a light coating of oil and fill it with a whole sheet of shortcrust pastry. If needed, use the second sheet to fill in the gaps and smooth this out to make a crust.
3. Pour the blended mixture into your crust/s and add any fillings you've chosen. Top with shredded cheese if desired. Bake for 30-45 minutes (until a skewer inserted comes out mostly clean).

Filling Ideas

2 leeks, washed, chopped and fried
Spinach, wilted, squeezed and chopped
Sun-dried tomatoes, sat in boiling water for 5 minutes, chopped
A tablespoon of pesto (try lemon pesto or kale chip pesto!)
Mushrooms, chopped, fried in garlic
Minced jalapenos

..and my personal favourite: pesto and sun-dried tomatoes, topped with cheese. Spread extra pesto on the melted cheese once it's baked.

Back: Sausage Rolls
Front: Pesto and Sun Dried
Tomato Mini Quiches





Pesto Mini Quiche (Page 043)
Spanakopita Triangle (Page 047)
Sausage Roll (Page 050)

ZAC'S TIP: Choose a phyllo pastry brand from the refrigerated section of the supermarket over a frozen one that you'll have to defrost for an easier experience. If you need to use a previously frozen pack of phyllo, may God help you. JK - just keep it covered and move quickly so it doesn't dry out or the sheets will be hard to pry apart.

Ingredients

1 large onion
3 garlic cloves
2 spring onions
500g fresh or frozen spinach, kale, silverbeet, chopped green beans, leeks or a mix of any
1 large bunch fresh dill
Juice and zest of a lemon
3 level tablespoons chickpea flour
200g feta cheese (reserve brine or oil)
1 pack phyllo pastry
¾ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper

ZAC'S TIP: A proper bunch of dill is huge, so if your local supermarket is one of those places that call a measly shrub a dill bunch, use two or three for the spanakopita recipe - the flavour dill gives is the star ingredient!

Method

1. Finely chop onion, garlic, shallots and greens. If using fresh greens, wilt them in batches in a large pot and store to the side to cool. In the same pot, add a drizzle of olive oil and fry the onions (and leeks if using) for 3 minutes. If using green beans, add them in and fry for 3 minutes. Stirring, add garlic and spring onion and cook for a few more minutes (until fragrant). Add lemon juice, zest and finely chopped dill and remove from heat.

Spanakopita

2. If using spinach, kale or silverbeet: squeeze as much liquid as you can out of the wilted or defrosted greens. If you think you're done, you're not. Keep squeezing until it's almost dry, any extra liquid will turn into steam and ruin the crispiness of the pastry.

3. Stir through chickpea flour and a dash of the brine/oil from the feta. You can process this for a few seconds in a food processor for smoothest texture, but if everything is finely chopped this isn't necessary.

4. Crumble in the feta and stir to mix all ingredients well. Season with salt and pepper.

For a classic pie: Preheat oven to 225 degrees celsius. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Remove your phyllo from the package and either move quickly, or cover with a scarcely damp cloth. Use a pastry brush to cover the base of the lined baking tray with olive oil and fill the tray with three sheets of phyllo.

With the pastry brush, drizzle or splash a little olive oil over the pastry and spread around. Place two sheets of phyllo halfway over one side of the tray. Repeat this for each side of the pita until you've used 8 sheets of phyllo.

ZAC'S TIP: Spread your butter/oil over the phyllo by using your pastry brush to splatter the olive oil over the pastry, before wiping the excess oil off the brush and using it to spread the splattered oil across the pastry. This helps to avoid oversaturated phyllo and lets you feel like Jackson Pollock.

Pour the filling over the middle of the pita, and spread until flat and smooth. Fold over each of the hanging sheets of phyllo, splattering and brushing with a little olive oil each time.

Place two more sheets of phyllo over half of the pita, sprinkling with olive oil before tucking the hanging part under the filled bottom of the pastry. Repeat for the other half of the pita.

With the remaining phyllo sheets, crumple them up loosely to create as much texture as possible. Line these up to cover the entire pita to create an upper crust. Dump the remaining olive oil over these evenly, using the pastry brush to smear over the entire surface.

Cut the pita into the portion sizes you'd like before baking. I like to use a whole crumpled phyllo sheet to cover the top of each divided portion.

Place in oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 175c. Bake for an hour on the middle rack and allow to cool for 20-30 minutes before serving.

For sausage roll style: Preheat oven to 180 degrees celsius. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Lay out each phyllo sheet and cover in oil. Fold in half lengthwise and cover in oil again. Heap the filling onto one side of the pastry, folding it over and pressing in the sides to make a parcel. Roll the wrapped filling until you achieve something like a sausage roll (using up a whole phyllo sheet per parcel). Brush once more with olive oil and bake for 20 minutes on the middle rack.

For triangle style: Preheat oven to 180 degrees celsius. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

You may need up to two phyllo packs to use all the filling with this style. Working in batches of 4 so they don't dry out, cut each sheet into quarters lengthwise with a pair of kitchen scissors and lay them out with the short end facing you.

Splatter and spread olive oil over half of the strips and place another strip over the top. If the pieces rip, don't stress. Spoon a tablespoon of the filling mixture onto the end closest to you.

Take the bottom right corner of the phyllo and fold it at a 90 degree angle to create a triangle shape, pressing down to spread the filling. Fold the triangle away from you at another 90 degree angle, and repeat this pattern to wrap all the phyllo around the filling in a triangle shape. Repeat until the filling is used up.

Spread triangles onto the baking tray and generously brush the tops with olive oil. Bake for 25 minutes on the middle rack.

Horiatiki Salata

Greek Salad

Ingredients

- 1 fridge cold cucumber, chunkily chopped
- 250g ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 red onion, diced (but not finely)
- 1/2 green capsicum, very thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup kalamata olives
- 100g dairy free feta (halved or quartered but not crumbled)
- A drizzle of olive oil
- Pinch of dry oregano
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Mix the first five ingredients in a large bowl and season well with salt and pepper.
2. Drizzle olive oil along with a hefty pinch of oregano before mixing again. Add feta to the top of the salad before serving.

Sausage Rolls

Makes 6 large or 9 medium rolls.

The hardest part about making this recipe is looking someone in the eye at the end and telling them it tastes just like the real thing. I use beefy burger patties and mushrooms to recreate meaty flavours and a mix of olive oil and soy milk over the pastry for a soft but crispy exterior. I've made these for hundreds of people and they've always been a hit, so give them a go!

Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 150-200g mushrooms
- 250g vegan mince or burger meat
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley (chopped)
- 2 cubes of beef/chicken stock powder
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 tablespoon dijon mustard
- 1/2 tablespoon worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme or rosemary
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds (optional)
- 1 teaspoon poppy seeds (optional)
- 5 drops liquid smoke (optional)
- 1.5 sheets puff pastry
- 1 1/3 tablespoon olive oil
- 2/3 tablespoon soy milk
- Pepper

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees celsius.
2. Roughly chop the onion and garlic, frying the onion for 5 minutes before adding the garlic and mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms have broken down and the liquid has evaporated. Blitz this in a food processor with the stock powder, soy sauce, worcestershire sauce, thyme/rosemary and liquid smoke.
3. Depending on the vegan meat you've chosen, you might like to brown it for a few minutes but this isn't necessary. In a large bowl, use a fork to mash the dijon mustard, pepper and parsley into the mince. Stir in the mushroom mixture until well mixed. Divide into thirds.
4. Lay out the puff pastry sheets. Spoon the sausage mixture along the edge of the puff pastry and roll the pastry over it, pressing down once the edge is on the bottom to create a sausage roll. Cut off excess pastry for your next roll.
5. Mix olive oil and soy milk in a small bowl. Use a pastry brush to spread this over the top of the pastry and sprinkle with poppy and sesame seeds. Cut in half for large rolls, thirds for medium rolls or quarters for wee baby rolls. Bake for 30 minutes.

Puttanesca

It goes without saying that the nicer the olives you choose for this dish, the better the final result. Canned 'black' olives from the supermarket are more often than not green olives processed to blacken and hold far less flavour. First preference goes to all kalamata olives, followed by good green ones. A mixture of kalamata olives and green olives (3:1) also works, but make sure to chop the green olives more finely as they'll take longer to break down. You can use ripe chopped or blended tomato if you've got time on your hands, canned diced tomato or even passata (strained tomatoes) if you need it to be quick. Or, to save time, just grab a fresh bowl from a local puttanesca tree (pictured).

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1-2+ tablespoons chilli flakes
(or 2-3 fresh, finely chopped red chillies)
- 1 tablespoon dry oregano
- Approx. 200g capers (drained and chopped)
- 1-1.5 cup chopped olives
- 1600g tomato (see above)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup parsley (chopped)
- Cooked spaghetti or angel hair pasta

Method

1. Heat the olive oil in a pot and add the garlic and chilli and stir for 1 minute.
2. Add capers, olives and oregano. Cook over high heat for several more minutes or until the mixture smells potent - if you're asphyxiating then you're on the right track.
3. Mix in the tomato and once it hits a boil, reduce to a simmer.
4. Cook for 30 to 60 minutes (depending on the types of tomato you used). Stir whenever the solids sink to the bottom and the liquid on top is bubbling. As it cooks, you'll notice the sauce developing a sheen as the olives break down.
5. Once it's lovely and glossy, add salt and pepper to taste and serve with cooked pasta.



Eggplant Parmigiana

ZAC'S TIP: Change how you cut and prepare the eggplant based on what baking dish you have in mind. If making the traditional version, cut long fillets. But if you want to get creative and make individual portions in a muffin tray, slicing small rounds will suit your purposes better.

Ingredients

Sauce

4 cups of prepared tomato pasta sauce, or to prepare yourself:

15 tomatoes

3 onions

10 cloves of garlic

6 tablespoons tomato paste

1.5 tablespoons dried basil

1.5 tablespoons dried oregano

3 teaspoons sugar

Italian Crumb

2 cups panko breadcrumbs

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup nutritional yeast

2 teaspoons salt

2 teaspoons dried basil

1 teaspoon pepper

Extra

3 medium eggplants

2 cups grated cheese

1 can's worth of aquafaba

(If using prepared tomato sauce, skip to step 3).

1. Finely chop onion and garlic. Purée tomatoes in a food processor.

2. In a pot:

- Fry onions in a dash of olive oil for as long and as slow as your schedule allows, until they turn translucent (at least 10 to 15 minutes).
- Add garlic and fry for several more minutes, followed by the tomato paste and dry herbs.
- Stir well and add puréed tomatoes and sugar.
- Bring to a simmer and cook for at least an hour. Pay attention to the raw smell of the tomatoes this will be replaced with a rich scent - telling you when you're close to done. You can complete the other steps of this recipe as this bubbles, so I recommend simmering it up until you need it.

3. Chop the ends off the eggplant and use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin.

- If using a large tray: slice each eggplant lengthwise into 2-3cm thick fillets.
- If making smaller portions: slice each eggplant into thin rounds.

4. Liberally salt all of the surface of the eggplant slices, wrap them in paper towels and weigh them down with a heavy object for 20 minutes. Once the moisture has been pressed out, wipe it and the salt off the eggplant.

5. Preheat the oven to 220 degrees celsius and line two baking trays with baking paper.

Method

6. Empty the aquafaba into a bowl and the flour into a separate bowl.

7. In a third bowl, mix the breadcrumbs, half of the nutritional yeast, salt, dried basil and pepper.

7. Dip each eggplant fillet or round into the aquafaba before coating it in flour.

8. Dip the eggplant back into the aquafaba before coating it in the breadcrumb mixture, using your hands to firmly press the breadcrumbs into the eggplant until they hold, creating a consistent coating.

9. Repeat for all eggplant and spray both sides with cooking spray before baking them for 30 minutes or until crispy golden brown.

10. Reduce oven temperature to 180 degrees celsius. In your chosen vessel for the eggplant parmigiana, layer the ingredients as follows:

- Generously spread the tomato sauce over the dish,
- Sprinkle two teaspoons of nutritional yeast, cover with baked eggplant schnitzels,
- Sprinkle shredded cheese and
- Repeat until your ingredients are gone or you realise you misjudged the size of the baking dish.
- Finish with tomato sauce, the remainder of the cheese and any leftover breadcrumb mixture to top.

11. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, or until heated through and the cheese has melted.



Lasagne



Makes 4 large serves.

Ingredients

500g vegan mince OR
Soaked TVP (textured vegetable protein)
1 jar (approx. 700g) passata (strained tomatoes)
1 jar (approx 500g) tomato paste
1/3 cup olive oil or dairy free butter
1/4 cup red wine
3 garlic cloves (finely minced)
2 tablespoons dried oregano
2 tablespoons dried basil
1.5 tablespoons onion powder
1 tablespoon celery salt
1 tablespoon cracked black pepper
3/4 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 teaspoon chilli powder
3 bay leaves
8-12 large instant lasagne sheets OR
Fresh lasagne sheets
1-2 cup dairy free shredded cheese
1/2 - 1 batch of Cheese Sauce (Page 019)

I remember when I first had lasagne. It was in the abundant warmth of my grandmother's home and her love. The only other time I ever remember being that happy was the one time I found a recipe that didn't have a recount of someone's week and a breakdown of their hopes and dreams before they tell you if you need to preheat your bloody oven. All you need to know about this recipe is it's cheesy, beefy and so rich that you'll expect it to pick up the bill. It'll be delicious the first time you have it, and again six months later when you remember you froze some and it's been waiting patiently for you in the freezer this whole time.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees celsius.
2. If using TVP, soak in an equal volume of broth (chicken style/beef style or vegetable will work).
3. In a large pot, place olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic, oregano, basil, onion, caraway seeds and chilli powder - cook for 2-3 minutes.
4. Add tomato paste, passata, wine, 2 cups of hot water, celery salt, pepper, sugar and bay leaves. Bring to a slow boil before adding mince/soaked TVP. Allow to simmer on low for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, before fishing out the bay leaves.
5. Prepare the Cheese Sauce, only using the first four ingredients of the recipe - this will make a roux or classic white sauce. Save the shredded cheese for the top of the lasagne.
6. Coat a large oven-proof dish lightly in oil and spread a small amount of mince mixture and white sauce so that there is a thin layer coating the entire base. Fill the tray with a single layer of lasagne sheets. Cover this layer with a layer of mince, followed by another of white sauce and lasagne sheets on top. You may also opt to sprinkle dairy free cheese in between each layer if you're some sort of billionaire who can afford to do so.
7. Continue this process until your tray is full or your mince/white sauce is used up. Ensure the top layer is white sauce and sprinkle the top with your dairy free cheese.
8. Bake for 45 minutes and allow to cool slightly before serving.

Fried Mac & Cheese Balls

ZAC'S TIP: If you're out of flour, this recipe works (with a very slightly different final texture) by coating the balls in aquafaba, followed by breadcrumbs, dipped back into aquafaba and finished off in the breadcrumbs. This is because the nutritional yeast in the breadcrumb mix helps to fill the gaps in the breadcrumbs and creates a complete barrier between the cheese and the oil (which is the job flour does in the normal recipe).

Method

1. Mix the cheese sauce with the cooked macaroni and call it a day if you're just after a good bowl of mac and cheese.
2. Top with breadcrumbs and bake until golden to make it even better. Add cooked vegetables if you'd like to make it worse.
3. If continuing on to make the fried balls, put this mixture in the fridge until cold.
4. Pour aquafaba, breadcrumbs and flour into separate bowls to create a crumbing station.
5. Use a spoon to scoop out the macaroni mix (I wouldn't go larger than a dessert spoon) and use your hands to roll this into a tight ball.
6. Dip the ball in flour, coating fully before dipping into aquafaba. Once the excess aquafaba is dripped off, dip into the breadcrumbs and use your hands to press the breadcrumbs into the exterior, fixing up the shape if needed.
7. Place the balls into frying oil (see deep frying tips) and cook until crispy and golden on the outside (2-3 minutes), before draining on a paper towel for several minutes and serving.

Makes 30 balls (2-3 bites each).

The best part about a recipe ebook is that there's no comment section for people to write things like 'that's a lot of sugar, not very healthy' and other mundane contributions instead of just scrolling by like everyone else and letting people enjoy things.

Ingredients

1 batch cheese sauce (Page 019)
300g macaroni shells (cooked)
1 batch of **Italian Crumb**
(Page 053) or equivalent
breadcrumbs
1/2 can aquafaba (about 1/4 cup)
1/2 cup plain flour
Canola oil for frying



Ingredients

300g dry chickpeas
1 onion
6 cloves garlic
1 bunch each parsley
and coriander
1/2 cup chickpea flour
1 1/3 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon baking
powder
1/3 teaspoon each:
Cardamom
Cayenne pepper
Coriander powder
Squeeze of lemon

Method

Falafel

It's important to try and save water, but eating dry falafel isn't the way to go about it. It's interesting to think how if so many non-vegans 'hate' vegan food why do they try to make their food look like it? For example, shaping meat into 'meatballs' just cries of desperation, if someone wants a falafel so bad they should just have a real one. When preparing, soak chickpeas overnight to ensure they've absorbed lots of water. Eat the falafel freshly cooked, keeping the prepared mix in the fridge for on-demand frying instead of eating them days later. Treat your falafels right by loading them with hummus, tahini and tabbouleh.

Makes approx 25-35 falafel.

1. Rinse chickpeas well and soak in water, covered, overnight.
2. When soaked, rinse again well and allow chickpeas to dry before using.
3. In a food processor, pulse the onion and garlic until they form a paste. Add a dash of olive oil to a pot and fry onion/garlic for 10 to 15 minutes. Towards the end of the cooking time, add the cumin and remove from heat once fragrant.
4. Grind the chickpeas in the food processor finely, stopping before they start to become paste but making sure there are no larger pieces of chickpea left.
5. Remove the stems from the parsley/coriander and add the leaves so that they are fully blended into the chickpeas.
6. Add the chickpea mixture and the onion mixture into a large bowl and mix in all other ingredients.
7. Allow this to sit in the refrigerator for at least half an hour, and keep refrigerated until needed.
8. Bring a few centimetres of oil to frying temperature on the stovetop.
9. Use your hands to grab small amounts of the falafel mix and roll into tight, small balls. My general rule is to make them no bigger than what you can hold in one tight fistful or less.
10. Fry the falafel in batches of six for several minutes, sloshing them around so all sides brown evenly.
11. Remove when golden brown and pat with/rest on paper towels before serving with Quinoa Tabbouleh (Page 029) and Hemp Seed Hummus (Page 013).

Mafé

West African
Peanut Stew

Serves 4-6.

Some folks think that if everyone goes vegan, we run the risk of animals overpopulating and taking over. Whilst it's a lovely thought, it's simply not true. Celebrate this fact by trying the meat-free version of this dish that usually uses real chicken, here substituted with lots of hidden vegetables. It's drinkable satay sauce.

Ingredients

1 onion
4 cloves garlic
1.5 tablespoon ginger (fresh)
1+ teaspoon chilli powder
1 1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon turmeric (fresh or powdered)
1 teaspoon cinnamon
3 red capsicum
1 med-large sweet potato
1 large eggplant
2 cups diced tomato
1+ cup smooth peanut butter
5 cups vegetable or chicken style stock
2 tablespoon tomato paste
A handful of peanuts, crushed
1 bunch coriander

Method

1. Dice the sweet potato and eggplant (skin on, use a serrated knife) and set aside.
2. Roughly chop garlic and onion and fry together in a dash of olive oil in a large pot for 5 minutes.
3. Add:
 - Sweet potato and fry, occasionally stirring, for 10 minutes.
 - Add ginger and turmeric (minced if fresh), chilli powder, cumin, cinnamon and tomato paste.
 - Follow with diced tomato and bring to a boil.
 - Add in the stock and eggplant, returning the stew to a boil.
 - Reduce to a simmer and cover.
4. Finely slice the red capsicum, massage with olive oil and place on a tray under the oven grill for 20-25 minutes or until charring, tossing frequently.
5. After the stew has simmered for 30 minutes or the eggplant has broken down, remove from heat and add in the peanut butter.
6. Use an immersion blender to purée the stew until smooth. Taste and adjust salt/spices as you desire.
7. Serve hot over rice (try Yellow Rice - page 025), with chopped coriander, the charred capsicum, crushed peanuts and as much chilli as you can handle.



Kakiage

Serves 4-6
(ka-kee-ah-geh)

Ingredients

4 cups thinly sliced veg

Eg.

1 cup onion (1 medium)

1 cup sw. potato (1 small)

1 cup carrot (2-3)

1 cup green beans (approx 100g)

1 cup flour

1 cup ice-cold water

1/2 cup cornflour (or potato starch)

3 tablespoons Mayonnaise (Page 011)

Large pinch of salt

Opt: 12 fresh shiso leaves

Opt: 1/2 cup of vegan dried anchovy
or fried shallots

My favourite sushi filling ever. This dish is a fabulous way to use up the vegetables left in your fridge at the end of the week, much like how some do in Japan. Now you can deep fry your way to minimising food waste. Onion and carrots are staple choices, but others include: eggplant, broccoli, shiitake mushrooms.

You can make larger pieces (pictured ones are largest I would go) or small bites depending on whether you'll serve this on Japanese Rice (page 091), in sushi or just dip in sauce and go. Adding mayonnaise to the batter, being oil based, means once it fizzles away into the oil, we'll end up with an even crispier end product.

Method

1. Chop your vegetables, keeping in mind that you should chop fast-cooking veg thicker, and slow-cooking veg as finely as you can so everything finishes cooking at the same time.
2. Add your veg mix to a large bowl with the anchovy/shallots.
3. In a small bowl, mix flour, cornflour and salt.
4. Sprinkle a little of the flour over the veg mix, stirring until all the vegetables have a thin layer on them.
5. In a larger bowl, add the mayonnaise before mixing in the ice-cold water.
6. Add the rest of the flour mix into this bowl and gently stir (as little as you can) - just until the flour is loosely mixed in.
7. Pour the batter over the veg mix, remembering to stir very slightly..
8. Preheat enough oil in a pot to shallow-fry (see frying tip section).
9. Use a spatula and a spoon to prepare each kakiage for frying.
10. Spoon your desired amount of batter covered mix onto a spatula before lowering the spatula into the hot oil and using a spoon to scrape it off into the oil.
11. Cook on one side until it is crisp enough to flip the kakiage over without it falling apart (about 3 minutes) and cook for the same duration on the other side. Try to avoid flipping more than once during cooking.
12. Remove from oil and rest on a paper towel.
13. Garnish with sauces (japanese mayonnaise, tempura sauce, teriyaki sauce) and eat as is, on rice, in sushi or however you like.

Okonomiyaki

Makes 4 pancakes.

It's surprisingly easy to make okonomiyaki for 'as you like' and 'vegan' translates language. This dish is a savoury cabbage-based pancake that has flavour that varies slightly region to region in Japan. Usually it uses grated yam to hold the batter together with an egg, but for those of us who can't get yams easily and don't eat eggs - a potato and flaxseed/aquafaba save the day. It's all about the toppings and sauce. To make okonomi sauce, mix 3 parts ketchup, 2.5 parts worcestershire sauce and 1 part rice wine vinegar. If you can see your okonomiyaki on the plate before you eat it, you've not used enough sauce or toppings.

Ingredients

8 cups shredded cabbage
2 cups flour
1 1/3 cup vegetable stock
4 tablespoons water or aquafaba
4 tablespoons flax seed meal
1 grated potato
4 stalks of green onion
1/2 cup fried shallots
Okonomi Sauce
Sushi ginger
Shredded dried seaweed

Method

1. Combine flaxseed meal and water. Set aside to thicken.
2. Finely chop green onion and cabbage.
3. Grate the potato, keeping the juices.
4. In a large bowl, mix green onion, fried shallots, potato and cabbage.
5. In a separate bowl, add vegetable stock, flour and prepared aquafaba/flax mix. Stir well and pour over the bowl of vegetables.
6. Using your hands, mix everything together really well - there shouldn't be too much batter covering everything. Let sit for at least 15 minutes.
7. In an lightly oiled frying pan on low-medium heat, place a large handful of the mixture, pressing down with a spatula before cooking for roughly 5 minutes on each side, or until crispy and completely browned.
8. Remove Okonomiyaki from pan and cover in Okonomi sauce, pickled sushi ginger, more fried shallots, Japanese mayonnaise and whatever toppings you can dream up.





CFC
Drumsticks



CFC Drumsticks

Makes 4 drumsticks.

Ingredients

DRUMSTICKS

2 cans young green jackfruit (565g cans before draining, 280g cans after draining)
1 medium cauliflower
1 1/2 cups of chicken style stock
2 teaspoons nutritional yeast
1 teaspoon onion powder
10 drops of liquid smoke
1 can's worth of aquafaba
500-750ml vegetable oil for frying

SPICE MIX

3/4 cup plain white flour
3/4 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon celery salt
1/4 teaspoon sage
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/4 teaspoon dried basil
Pinch of dried oregano
Pinch of turmeric
Optional: 1/2 teaspoon kala namak
1 teaspoon MSG/umami flavouring

Heston Blumenthal makes meat that looks like fruit, and everyone's hands hurt from clapping. Vegans use fruit to make meat and the four horsemen of the apocalypse appear on the horizon because we've gone too far. When I first published this recipe, someone called it the 'blackface of veganism', which is wrong for many reasons, but primarily because eating meat is not a culture that can be appropriated – meat does not own textures, flavours or shapes. It only has the monopoly on death, and dishes like this celebrate the fact that veganism can make its way into all the niches and places people didn't think it could ever get to. If your CFC drumstick grosses you out then you've succeeded in replicating the real thing. For a zinger version, boost the paprika, chilli, onion and garlic in the spice mix and add mustard powder.

Method

1. Open the two cans of jackfruit and discard the liquid, rinse the pieces in a colander. Each piece will be triangular shaped, with a harder core – cut off this core before squeezing the jackfruit so that any seeds pop out, all of the brine is squeezed out and it spreads out to become stringier.
2. Place the jackfruit in a pot with the chicken style stock, nutritional yeast, onion powder and liquid smoke.
3. Bring the stock to a boil whilst stirring and then continue to boil for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to low, cook for a further 10 minutes or until the liquid has been absorbed by the jackfruit. Remove from heat and allow to cool.
4. Take your cauliflower and cut off all leaves as close to the stem as you can, whilst making sure to not cut off any of the stem. Cut the whole cauliflower into quarters, slicing from the stem to the florets of the cauliflower – you want to keep the stem attached to the florets as this is what will make your 'bone' and also hold onto the flesh of the jackfruit. Cut off the majority of the florets of each cauliflower quarter, so that you get the basic shape of a drumstick.

5. Place a piece of cling-wrap on your bench, followed by one of your cauliflower 'bones', and a quarter of the jackfruit mixture spread around the floret part of the cauliflower. Wrap the cling-wrap around the jackfruit flesh, leaving the stem of the cauliflower exposed, and twist the cling-wrap until it wraps around the flesh tightly. Use this opportunity to mould the fleshy part of your drumstick, mashing it around until you achieve the desired shape. Repeat for each cauliflower bone, then place all of the drumsticks in your freezer for at least an hour to firm up.

6. Mix spice mix ingredients in a large bowl, and pour the aquafaba into a separate bowl – also set up a plate of paper towels to transfer the drumsticks to once fried.

7. Once the drumsticks have firmed up, take them out of the freezer and unwrap the cling-wrap – and this is where it gets tricky. Once aquafaba hits the jackfruit flesh it will want to fall apart, so be sure to work quickly from this point.

8. Dip both of your hands into the aquafaba and coat the whole drumstick before dipping it into the flour mixture and compressing the flesh onto the cauliflower as much as possible. Once you've coated the drumstick in the flour mixture, it will sit on the 'bone' much easier and you can use this opportunity to reshape the flesh on the bone so that it looks just right. Dip your hands back into the aquafaba, coat the drumstick once more and cover it in another layer of the flour mixture. Repeat for each drumstick.

9. Prepare oil for deep frying (see deep frying guide).. Cook the drumsticks in batches of two, constantly turning until they become a nice brown colour on all sides. Use tongs to turn, and make sure you grip the drumsticks by the fleshy part as you turn them so they maintain their shape. After 3 – 5 minutes, remove from the pot and place on the paper towels – serve immediately with your choice of dipping sauces!

Southern Fried Cauliflower

Ingredients

1 medium cauliflower
1 can's worth of aquafaba
500-750ml vegetable oil
1-2 batches CFC
Drumsticks Spice Mix

Method

1. Roughly tear or chop cauliflower into bite-sized florets. Place spice mix and aquafaba in separate bowls to form a flouring station. Prepare a pot of oil for deep frying (See **Deep Frying Tips**).
2. Dip cauliflower in aquafaba then coat in flour, repeating once.
3. Fry for 3-4 minutes in oil until golden brown, rest on paper towels and serve while drowning them in all the dipping sauce you can dream of: mayonnaise, ranch, barbeque, hot, sriracha, buffalo, aioli and whatever's on hand!

Jackfruit Karaage

Ingredients

2 cans young green jackfruit
(565g cans before draining,
280g cans after draining)
1 1/2 cups of chicken style stock
2 teaspoons nutritional yeast
1 teaspoon onion powder
10 drops of liquid smoke
A few dashes of soy sauce
1-2 tablespoons fresh ginger
1/2 cup of potato starch

Method

1. Follow steps 1 - 3 in CFC Drumsticks, adding soy sauce to the broth as you cook the jackfruit. Allow the jackfruit mixture to cool.
2. Use your hands to form the jackfruit mixture into small balls, squeezing out excess liquid. Grate the ginger and collect it into a spoon. With your finger, press down to release the juice and use only this to pour over the prepared karaage.
3. Prepare a pot of oil for deep frying (See **Deep Frying Tips**), but place a metal sieve over the oil or a plate nearby to transfer karaage to.
4. Spread potato starch out in a bowl and lightly coat each of the karaage with it. Allow karaage to sit for at least 10 minutes before frying.
5. Fry the karaage for one minute before removing to the seive/plate. Rest for half a minute before returning to the oil for the same duration. Remove, rest again and fry for thirty more seconds so they're super crispy.
6. Rest once more before serving. Karaage goes great with Japanese mayonnaise and/or *Kakiage* (Page 064) on top of Japanese/sushi rice (Page 091) with salad and a pinch of herbs/sliced lemon to garnish.

Japanese/Sushi Rice (Page 091)
Kakiage (Page 064)
Jackfruit Karaage



Mortal, Django posing with Caesar Salad
using Rice Paper Bacon (Page 038).



CFCaesar



CFC Caesar

Ingredients

DRESSING

1 cup olive oil
6 tablespoons aquafaba
2 tablespoons chickpeas
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
1 tablespoon capers
1 tablespoon dijon or hot mustard
3 teaspoons worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
Juice of two lemons
6 cloves garlic
Opt: 1/2 cup hemp seeds (for thicker sauce and extra protein)

FOR SALAD (per serving):

1 head baby cos lettuce
2 sheets of **Rice Paper Bacon**
3-4 tablespoons caesar dressing
2 teaspoons nutritional yeast
1 teaspoon capers
A slice of stale bread
Olive oil to drizzle
Opt: 1 piece of pan fried chicken
(Australia: Unreal Co Schnitzel) OR
1 serving CFC Drumsticks or
Southern Fried Cauliflower

FOR BURGERS (per serving):

Same as for salad, but replace the stale bread with two pieces of fresh bread or a burger bun.

FOR DOUBLE DOWN (per serving):

Same as for salad, but add two pieces of fried chicken and omit the bread.

Method

To make the dressing:

1. Use a blender, or immersion blender and suitable jug. Add the aquafaba, chickpeas and salt. Pulse several times.
2. Slowly add the olive oil while running the blender (like mayonnaise) until the mixture has thickened - when roughly $\frac{2}{3}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of the oil has been used.
3. Add all other ingredients bar the remaining olive oil and hemp seeds. Blend thoroughly before slowly pouring in the olive oil to thicken the emulsion again. If using hemp seeds, add them now and blend again thoroughly. The sauce will now be very thick and ready to go.

To make croutons: Preheat oven to 200 degrees celsius. Cut stale bread into cubes and drizzle with olive oil, tossing to coat before adding to a lined baking tray. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden and crispy.

To make Caesar Salad (chicken and bacon optional): Wash, dry and roughly tear the lettuce leaves. Prepare Rice Paper Bacon (page 038) and either CFC Drumsticks, cauliflower or jackfruit style, or a store-bought faux chicken.

In a large bowl per serving, add half the dressing and all the lettuce leaves, mixing to coat. Use kitchen scissors to chop rice paper bacon into pieces and slice the chicken. Add both to the bowl, covering with nutritional yeast, capers and the remaining dressing. Top with croutons and serve.

To make Caesar Burgers or Caesar Sandwiches: Wash, dry and roughly tear the lettuce leaves. Prepare Rice Paper Bacon (page 038) and store-bought faux chicken.

If using burger buns, slice in half and lightly toast each side. Spread dressing over the insides of a bun or sandwich bread, layering the cos lettuce on top of one. Add the chicken, rice paper bacon and remaining ingredients. Place the second half of the burger bun or sandwich slice (with dressing already spread) to the top of the burger/sandwich and serve.

To make a Caesar Double Down:

Wash, dry and roughly tear the lettuce leaves. Prepare Rice Paper Bacon (page 038) and store-bought faux chicken.

Spread dressing over one side of both of the pieces of chicken, layering the rice paper bacon onto the dressing. Fill the centre of both of the pieces of chicken with the lettuce to create a burger where the bread is replaced with fried chicken instead.



Beer Battered Banana Blossoms

Ingredients

Method

MARINATED BLOSSOMS

2 cans banana blossoms in brine

2 green onions

1-2 sheet of nori

2 cm fresh ginger

2 clove fresh garlic

2 bay leaves

3 tablespoons lemon juice

1/2 cup of white wine

1/2 cup self raising flour + extra

1/2 cup beer or fresh soda water

Salt and pepper

Pinch of celery salt

Oil for frying

1. Open the two cans of banana blossoms and rinse under water - squeeze as much liquid as you can out to rid the brine flavour. Put the drained pieces into a bowl.
2. In a food processor, combine green onion, seaweed, ginger, garlic, white wine and lemon juice. Pour this over the banana blossoms and massage through. Make sure the blossoms are now spread out and not squished together from the wringing out of water.
3. Add a generous pinch of salt and add water to just cover the banana blossoms. Cover in cling-wrap and marinate from one hour to 24 hours in the fridge.
4. When ready to fry, place the beer/soda and flour into the freezer for a few minutes and place your oil over heat to get up to temperature.

5. Remove the marinated banana blossoms from the fridge and scoop a big handful of them out of the marinade and squeeze it together. The goal is to wring out the majority of the liquid, but keeping just a little for moistness and flavour. This action should also bring the blossoms together into a 'fillet'. You can easily adjust this size for preference. Coat in a little of your seasoned flour to create a dry exterior.

6. Once you've repeated this process for all of the banana blossom, prepare your beer batter. Add the celery salt, salt and pepper to the flour in a medium bowl and slowly pour in the cold beer/soda. Stop intermittently to fully incorporate the liquid before adding more.

7. Once prepared, you'll want to batter each piece quickly before you add to the oil. Dip each fillet into the batter, scooping the batter around it. Place the battered fillet into the oil and cook for 2-4 minutes or until brown and crisp on the outside.

Deep Fried Tarantula

Some people were a bit grossed out by how close CFC drumsticks look to the real thing, and it's been said that tarantula tastes a bit like chicken. Hence I've created this recipe so you can enjoy a vegan version of the familiar flavour you love without being put off by how it looks. Not every faux meat will work for this recipe, Australia: I used Unreal Co™ chicken range. It is gluten free and made from soy, rice and pea protein. Experiment with your local options, I recommend brands with refrigerated and not pre-baked whole pieces rather than prepared/crumbed frozen products as they are more receptive to being reshaped.

Ingredients

Around 150g chicken meat
8 asparagus spears
Cracked pepper
3 cloves of garlic
Juice of 1/2 a lemon
1/2 batch CFC Drumsticks Spice Mix + aquafaba
(or a similar mix of flour/salt/spices/herbs)
Oil for frying

Method

1. Stop screaming.
2. Chop a few centimetres off the ends of the asparagus spears, using a vegetable peeler to shave the ends into rough points. You'll probably need to adjust these later, so it doesn't need to be perfect. Toss these with the lemon juice and pepper. Set aside to marinate.
3. You may need to get creative depending on what faux meat is available to you. Use wet hands to shape the chicken piece/s into a rough arachnid shape - there's a 'head' and an 'abdomen'. Just do your best.
4. Stab the tarantula's body all over with a fork. Finely chop garlic and rub it into the holes and surface of the body. Your spider may benefit from a quick blast in the microwave to help hold it all together.
5. Prepare your largest pot for deep frying (See **Deep Frying Guide**) and pour aquafaba into a bowl. Cover the spider in the spice mix, before using a chopstick to mark out holes for the legs to go into. Technically the legs should mostly extend from the 'head' but take as many liberties as you need to make it work.
6. Dip each of the asparagus spears into the aquafaba before coating with the spice mix. Poke the pointy end into your prepared holes, pushing in as deep as you can and adjusting length if needed for even legs.
7. Deep fry with the legs side down first until golden brown and flip to repeat on the other side, time will vary with the chicken brand you're using. If a leg falls off, just pop it back in after frying. Serve hot with sauce. Great choices include flavoured mayo, lemon juice, pesto, ranch, tartare or hot sauce.



IMMORTALS ONLY

If you are not familiar with tarantulas, they look and taste very similar to face huggers. Unable to get fresh face huggers imported to you? This recipe will do the trick. With a bit of extra shaping and an extra piece of asparagus as a tail, you can enjoy a fried facehugger like mama used to make.

Ingredient Guide

Almonds

Almonds are often forced into vegan alternatives, but almond milk is a great substitute for water, and almond yoghurt is a fabulous alternative to PVA glue. If you can get your hands on a jar of almond butter or have the time to make some with a food processor, try it in *Curried Broccoli and Almond Butter Soup* (page 025) for a refreshingly good use of almonds.

Anchovies

All references to fried anchovies in this ebook refer to a pre-made vegan product available at some Asian supermarkets and are optional ingredients in the recipes. To replace the flavour of anchovies, refer to *Capers* (page 083).

Asparagus

Cut a few centimetres off the tough end of the spear and shave off any tough parts before cooking. My favourite way to prepare asparagus (you'll begin to notice a trend soon) is to pan-fry it with garlic and lemon juice. Make a lazy man's pizza with puff pastry covered in pesto and mozzarella baked at 180 degrees celsius for 25 minutes, adding sliced cherry tomatoes half-way through. Top with the pan-fried asparagus, slice and serve. Or, get freaky and make *Tarantula* (page 079).

Avocado

Perfect in almost every way except for when people try to cook it. Avocado chips and warm pasta sauce are atrocities against the avocado. Try it raw with *Tomato Salmon* (page 032) or in *Mediterranean Pasta Salad* (page 018).

Aquafaba

Remarkably versatile, the liquid found in canned beans or formed through cooking beans (including tofu brine). The liquid works from homemade or canned prepared chickpeas, butter beans, kidney beans (only use for dark recipes like chocolate brownies), black beans (same note as kidney beans), tofu and more. It can mimic an egg in almost any application, including egging someone you don't like (particularly effective if you leave the liquid in the can!)

This versatility extends to Scrabble™ where it is now an official word and perfect excuse to use up your Q's, F's and B's. Reducing it to raise the viscosity helps its effectiveness in dishes such as meringues, macarons, ice-creams, etc. As a loose rule, 3 tablespoons of aquafaba will replace 1 egg in baked recipes.

Banana Blossom

Your best bet at finding this will be the canned version in an Asian grocery store, which you can use in *Beer Battered Banana Blossom* (page 078) or *Mermaid Tail* (page ∞). It's weird, kind of gross and doesn't look very appealing. So it's perfect for mimicking seafood. Only use fresh banana blossom if you're looking for a summer project and not if you intend to have a quick, easy meal.

Basil

It's said that the best pesto is made with a mortar and pestle, but the people who say that have a lot more time on their hands than the rest of us. A food processor gets the same job done in minutes and means you can capitalise on marked-down basil to make opportunistic large batches. Try shredding fresh Thai basil into *Fried Rice* (page 091).

Breadcrumbs

If you check the ingredients on cheap breadcrumbs, you'll find more genetic diversity than a public bathroom with common ingredients including egg, milk and fish. Choose a brand that's straight up bread crumbs and not factory floor sweepings, which is usually just the more expensive option.

Broccoli

Steam, grill, blanch, broil or bake; broccoli comes out great. Try it in *Curried Broccoli and Almond Butter Soup* (page 025).

Brussels Sprouts

Criminally underrated, brussels sprouts are often robbed of their full potential by a misguided cook. My favourite way to prepare them is to cut off the stem, quarter each sprout and massage in olive oil and salt like you would a kale chip, spreading the outer leaves. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes at 180 degrees celsius, cut side down, to discover what you've been missing.

Ingredient Guide

Cabbage

Cabbage is delicious fried (see *Okonomiyaki* on page 065) and can be fabulous raw when paired with a sweet dressing. Just please don't boil it.

Capsicum

Cut into thin strips and massage with olive oil, placing on a baking tray under the broiler/oven grill for 20 or so minutes, tossing regularly until they begin to char. Add to the top of *Mafé* (Page 062) or in *Fried Rice* (Page 091).

Capers

A great tool in a vegan cook's arsenal as the intense flavour goes well to replace salty fish-like flavours. Try it out in *CFCaesar Salad* (Page 075) where it replaces anchovies, in *Tartare Sauce* (Page 011) or grab that jar of capers you forgot you bought a few years ago and finally fulfil its destiny with *Puttanesca* (Page 052).

Carrots

Use them up in *Kakiage* (Page 064) or grate them into *Mafé* (Page 062) when you add the eggplant.. Carrots are often posited as a great salmon alternative, but I found tomato has it beat in that respect. They have a better use when peeled into a hot dog shape, boiled until just soft and marinated (think: veg or beef style stock, liquid smoke, spices, soy sauce) for a few hours and grilled before being served in buns with the usual hot dog toppings.

Cauliflower

The other, *other* white meat. Works well as a chicken alternative due to similar cooking times and a lovely natural flavour when cooked that matches well with flavours that match chicken. If you try *CFC Drumsticks* (Page 069), you'll also discover how the natural florets and stem of cauliflower can be used to replicate a chicken bone. I always opt for frying with spices, but cauliflower also does well in the oven. Try roasting whole cauliflower with cumin and olive oil and serve in *Potato Flatbread* (Page 028) with *Quinoa Tabbouleh* (Page 029), tahini and lemon juice

Cheese

Vegan cheese tends to offer you two options, good at melting or good at tasting good. Commercial options are rapidly improving and it's important to try the range of options on the market to see how your local options vary. Most dairy free cheese stands to benefit from using the back of a spoon to press down halfway through the cooking process to promote better melting. Rejuvelac (sprouted water) creates complex fermented flavours that makes for some of the best soft cheeses I've tried. At home, things that will help you recreate 'cheesy' flavours include; nutritional yeast, white miso paste, dijon mustard, rejuvelac or just being vegan long enough that you forget what real cheese tastes like.

Chickpeas

The secret to good falafel is soaked chickpeas and all recipes that call for otherwise don't have your best interests at heart. Use canned/cooked chickpeas to replace sweet potato in *Mafé* (page 062) or in *Hemp Seed Hummus* (page 013). That's the benefit to cooking with aquafaba they don't talk about: unlimited hummus.

Chickpea Flour

A serial offender of being served undercooked, resulting in bitter and unpalatable food. When allowed to fully cook through, this is a magic ingredient that does the heavy lifting in *Burmese Tofu* (page 035) and *Quiche* (page 043), and helps to bind *Falafel* (page 061) and *Spanakopita* (page 047). It's sometimes also called gram flour and besan flour, but check the ingredients if yours is sold under the besan name as it might be cut with a little split pea flour. If so, you'll need to use extra for your recipe (approx. 1:1.25 if using a brand with split pea flour). Try mixing chickpea flour and water (1:1) and frying for quick flatbread.

Coriander

Unfortunately, some people are genetically inferior and cannot enjoy how fantastic coriander is. With luck, their genes will have been bred out within a few generations but until then, they'll have to deal with missing out on how coriander is a great way to add a pop of fresh flavour to a dish or balance something spicy.

Ingredient Guide

Cornflour/Cornstarch

A thickening agent and super-light flour. The former is the AUS/UK name (where it is commonly, and more cheaply, made from wheat). Cornstarch is the US name for the same thing – cornflour in the US refers to whole ground corn kernels. The wheaten version works the same in most recipes (custards/flouring/thickening) that don't call for a corn flavour, but only the maize based cornflour is gluten free. See how crispy it can make your *Salt and Pepper Tofu* (page 033) or how to use it to cut plain flour, for a lighter batter like in *Kakiage* (page 064).

Cucumber

Keep them cold until just before you slice them for *Greek Salad* (page 049).

Dill

Arguably the best herb, but only if it's me you're arguing with. Great for seafood style dishes – try *Spanakopita* (Page 047), *Tartare Sauce* (Page 011) on *Beer Battered Banana Blossom* (Page 078) or go all in and make a whole *Mermaid Tail* (Page ∞).

Eggplant

Try *Mafé* (Page 062) for a quick use of extra eggplant. However, in a dish like *Eggplant Parmigiana* (Page 053) you'll want to take the time to remove the moisture and bitterness. Do this by salting the sliced eggplant, wrapping the slices in something absorbent and resting under a heavy weight. For me, though, eggplant shines at its brightest when charred and served in *Babaganoush* (Page 014). Store eggplant out of the refrigerator if possible.

Fennel

Liquorice: the vegetable.

Feta

Store-bought feta varies in ingredients and quality. The lower end ones are oil based and can, brand-to-brand, sometimes work nicely but are inconsistent. Tofu or nut based cultivated cheeses, albeit usually more expensive, perform much better when making veganised versions of feta based dishes.

Flaxseed

The O.G. egg replacer. Mixed with water, the resulting gel works as a great egg replacer, but specifically in baking recipes where an egg would serve as a binder. Bonus round: flaxseed are a rare vegan source of Omega-3.

Fish Sauce

Vegan versions can be found at speciality stores and, more recently, some Asian supermarkets. If you're making a recipe that calls for it but can't find it, guess you're having something else for dinner, aren't you? Or power through and replace it with soy sauce or leave it out.

Ginger

Just use the juice from fresh grated ginger to pack the flavour into *Jackfruit Karaage* (page 071) or make *Mafé* (page 062) for a healing pot of goodness.

Glutinous Rice Flour

Despite the name, this flour is gluten free and works as a 1:1 substitute for plain flour in roux and sauces (with a bit of extra effort mixing it in). See *Gluten Free Guide* (page 009).

Green Beans

Check out *Kakiage* (page 064) or pre-slice and fry them to make a novel filling for *Spanakopita* (page 047). Otherwise toss steamed green beans with *Kale Chip Pesto* (page 015) or pan fry with feta, lemon juice and dill for an easy snack. The only rule is that it's unforgivable to serve green beans without the tips sliced off at least.

Green Onion

Also called spring onion or scallions depending on where you are because seemingly nobody could agree on a name. Try in *Fried Rice* (page 091), *Spanakopita* (Page 047) or on top of *Okonomiyaki* (Page 065).

Hemp Seeds

If you're truly worried about your protein intake on a vegan diet, adding hemp seeds can provide the overkill you're looking for. They go great in *Hemp Seed Hummus* (page 013), sprinkled over nachos and buddha bowls, or blended with nutritional yeast to make a parmesan that's easier to sprinkle than nooch alone.

Ingredient Guide

Honey

The most delicious and marketable of all the animal vomits. Easily replaced by date or rice malt syrup. You can find my homemade honey recipe, made from apple juice and carob syrup that works like honey in any application on zaccharybird.com.

Jackfruit

Often mistakenly labelled as 'pulled pork' by people who have merely drowned it in BBQ sauce. Track down a can at your local Asian supermarket, making sure to find a young green jackfruit in brine, as the ripened versions are sweet, canned in syrup and only appropriate for desserts. This fruit is a cousin to durian, so don't bother messing around with fresh jackfruit if you don't need to. Try it at its strangest in *CFC Drumsticks* (Page 069) or *Jackfruit Karaage* (071).

Kale

When massaged with olive oil and salt and baked, it becomes clear kale has one true destiny: in chip form. Find the evidence in *Kale Chip Pesto* (Page 015) or *Mushroom and Kale Chip Pasta* on zaccharybird.com.

Kala Namak

Powdered fart. When not militarised as a chemical weapon, it is used to add 'eggy' flavour and scent to vegan recipes. Scrambled tofu goes from bland to suspiciously realistic with just a pinch of this.

Leek

For a great filling for *Spanakopita* (Page 047) or *Quiche* (Page 043), use only the white part of the leek. Chop off the root and green leaves before cleaning well between each layer. Slice thinly and sauté as you would onions. The green leaves are also edible but are better in a stew as they are tougher and have a different flavour.

Lemon

Add a teaspoon of lemon juice to a cup of soy milk and let sit for 5 minutes for quick vegan buttermilk. Great for buttermilk based dishes of which I've included none in this book.

Liquid Smoke

This isn't a scary ingredient, it's simply smoke passed through water so that you can trick your friends into thinking you spent hours lovingly cooking a dish for them. Great for introducing smoky flavours to vegan dishes, where the ingredients we choose generally don't need to be cooked long enough to pick up that flavour naturally. Can be found at BBQ stores. Use sparingly, add only a drop at a time.

Milk

As a general rule, if you can read this sentence you're too old to be drinking real milk. Milk alternatives include: soy, coconut, almond, hazelnut, oat, hemp, spelt and more. Soy and coconut are the top choices for replacing real milk's purpose in a recipe, as the fat content and distribution mimics real milk most closely.

MSG

Think sugar's umami cousin, this flavour enhancer really helps replicate pre-vegan flavours. While it has been demonised as being unhealthy, most research has concluded that it is perfectly safe for human consumption. Get into it.

Mushroom

Use them up to replace the soaked **TVP** in *Lasagne* (page 057). Slice them and fry them over a high heat with minced garlic until soft and browned to add to *Mediterranean Pasta Salad* (page 018)

Nori

The kind in the supermarket is toasted and ready for seaweed, but shredded and/or hydrated, it works as a quick way to introduce 'seafood' like flavours into a dish.

Ingredient Guide

Nutritional Yeast (Nooch)

The holy grail ingredient. Available in flakes or powder, this stuff tastes vaguely like a smoky cheese and is responsible for most homemade vegan cheese flavours. See **Hemp Seeds** to make a parmesan alternative. To boot, many brands fortify it with B12, and with it being naturally full of the other B complex vitamins, 'nooch' (as it is affectionately called) is an asset to anyone's pantry.

Alternative sources of B12 include an oral spray or toothpaste, occasional injection, adding a teaspoon of dirt to your morning smoothie, feeding a supplement to cattle and then eating them (the *natural* way), or just forgetting to take your supplement and then taking a handful every few days like the rest of us.

Olives

See *Puttanesca* (Page 052) for a great use of any olives, but also for notes on how to select olives for a recipe. Black olives are not always as they seem, with cheap pitted black olives often simply being unripe green olives coaxed through various treatments to darken.

Onion

French Onion Soup (page 023) will teach you how to properly caramelize an onion (hint: no sugar required and it takes time!). On the other end of the spectrum, *Kakiage* (page 064) is a great example of how well onions also turn out through quick frying. Chop them in half before peeling to save time or soak in ice cold water to save tears. Ironically, onion's intense flavour is its natural defense mechanism, which has been a fat lot of help to the onion seeing as how globally popular the flavour has become.

Parsley

What's the difference between the kinds? Flat leaf is full of flavour, and curly leaf is curly (well, it's a nicer garnish). They are generally interchangeable if you prefer one over the other. The stems pack heaps of the flavour, so don't be too quick to get rid of them.

Peanuts

Those things you couldn't take to school. Make up for lost lunches with *Mafé* (page 062) or by using a satay sauce for *Unicorn Steak* (page ∞).

Pickles

You want dill pickles and not the sweet and sour kind for *Tartare Sauce* (page 011). The latter is better on burgers and then later being picked off burgers by children.

Potato

There are few foods as celebrated as the potato. For example, hot chips are the finest vegan offering available at many of the world's top restaurants. The perfect french fry is hotly debated, with suggestions to double and even triple fry them at various temperatures. For me, the perfect french fry is one that's simply crisp and not fried in animal fat. When boiling potato, cook in unsalted water, and if using potatoes that have a tendency to fall apart whilst boiling, start them in cold water. For baked potatoes, par-boil for several minutes, dry properly and shake in a metal colander to rough up the edges before baking in a hot oven with preheated oil, tossing occasionally for at least 45 minutes.

Potato Starch

Great for uber-crispy coating when frying food. You can generally swap this with cornflour when it comes to things like *Salt and Pepper Tofu* (page 033) or *Karaage* (page 071).

Quinoa

Healthy people go mad for it. Easier to find and gluten free alternative to bulgur wheat when making *Quinoa Tabbouleh* (page 029).

Real Meat

Yuck.

Red Onion

Get to sobbing and make a batch of *French Onion Soup* (page 023) or *Greek Salad* (page 049).

Ingredient Guide

Rice Paper

Great in faux meat, thanks to its ability to hold a marinade as well as crisp up to create a 'skin'. See for yourself with *Rice Paper Bacon* (page 038) or *Unicorn Steak* (page ∞). Check out *Rice Paper Hacks* (page 037) for more rice paper magic.

Rice

Short grain rice tends to come out sticky, whereas others tend to have a fluffy texture and are better suited to Indian and many Asian cuisines. To make Japanese style rice for sushi and other dishes, make sure to select short grain and rinse it well of starch. Cook as per packet instructions. When cooked, per cup of rice, gently stir in a mixture of 4 tablespoons rice wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons sugar and 1 tablespoons mirin (or an approximation of this to taste). If you have a dish with lots of toppings to the rice, a few dashes of mirin can be simply enough.

Cheat at making medium-long grain rice quickly by bringing 1.5 cups of well salted water to the boil, adding in 1 cup of rice and covering/reducing to simmer. Will be ready in 12-14 minutes. Fluff and serve. See also: *Yellow Rice* (page 025).

Make fried rice as follows: use 1 cup leftover rice and 1 cup mixed vegetables (cut into small pieces) per person. Cook vegetables in a large wok on high heat until almost fully cooked through, adding garlic and a small amount of stock halfway through along with any short-cooking vegetables that just need a quick steam. Remove vegetables once the stock evaporates and add 1 tablespoon of oil per person. Immediately, add rice and thinly sliced green onion. Stir constantly, cooking for several minutes before adding a combination of a dash of light soy sauce (not enough to change the colour of the rice) and chinese five spice, and optionally fish sauce or chilli. Add the vegetables back in for the final minute, adjusting for sauces/spices to taste and serve with fresh cashews and a wedge of lemon.

Roux

Fat and flour cooked together to form a paste, serving as a base/thickener for soups and sauces like *Cheese Sauce* (page 019). The general ratio for a roux is 1:1 fat and flour by weight, needing 1-2 tablespoons of fat (oil/butter) to 2 tablespoons of flour to thicken 1 cup of liquid. White roux, which is generally what is called for in this book, is best for thickening sauces. It is cooked for just a few minutes, to cook out the raw flavour and until it becomes bubbly. Dark roux is used in stews and gumbo.

Shallots

Also known as scallions. Fried shallots are pre-fried, available at most supermarket and go well inside *Kakiage* (Page 064) or on top of *Okonomiyaki* (Page 065).

Silverbeet

That stuff I get when they're out of spinach to put in *Spanakopita* (Page 047).

Shiso

Fresh Japanese shiso leaves can taste a little like cumin, and the dried purple version is my favourite onigiri style. If you can find it, these are fantastic in *Kakiage* (Page 064) but not at all necessary.

Spinach

Full of nutrients that you should be sure to squeeze out with the rest of the liquid when using spinach as a filling, like in *Spanakopita* (Page 047) or *Quiche* (Page 043).

Stock

In Australia, a great deal of chicken and beef stock are vegan by default. Luckily, we can utilise these easily available resources to add faux meat flavours to our cooking. If a vegan version is unavailable, vegetable stock won't ruin the recipe. On that note, many soup recipes are delicious with only water instead of using the same stock as a base for all your soups.

Soy Sauce

There are different kinds: Japanese recipes often call for dark soy sauce, whereas for something like fried rice I would opt for a lighter soy sauce. Heavy in sodium, which should be factored into your final dish. Gluten free options are available, and tamari can be used for a reduced sodium alternative.

Ingredient Guide

Soy Milk

To make homemade soy milk, add one tablespoon of soy sauce to one cup of milk. Please don't though. Soy milk, made from soybeans, is one of the best substitutes for real milk as the fat droplets are suspended in the liquid, lending it better to creamy dishes that rely on milk's fat distribution. If there was any truth to the myth that drinking soy gives men breasts, I'd look a hell of a lot better in a crop top by now.

Sun-dried Tomatoes

Keep a jar on hand for when you feel like *Mediterranean Pasta Salad* (Page 018) or to mix up your fillings for *Quiche* (Page 043).

Sweet Potato

Named yams in the US and kumera in New Zealand, you can't go wrong with slicing them into thin fries before baking with spices for healthy french fries. Otherwise, *Potato Bread* (page 028) will open the floodgates when you realise you can confidently double your bread consumption when half of it is made from mashed vegetables. Sorry in advance.

Tomato

If you have slightly unripe tomatoes, use them in *Tomato Salmon* (page 032 - includes how to skin a tomato). Ripe tomatoes are perfect in *Eggplant Parmigiana* (Page 053) and using fresh tomatoes actually makes a smoother sauce than using some canned versions that add calcium to the ingredients. Tomatoes are such a versatile fruit, it's hard to remember it's not a vegetable half of the time. Fun fact: Heinz TM tomato ketchup is sometimes proclaimed as the closest balance we have between umami, sweet, salty, bitter and sour, which explains its timeless popularity.

Tofu

Try *Burmese Tofu* (page 035) for a quick, basic tofu you can make in less than an hour with 5 minutes of effort. *Salt and Pepper Tofu* (page 033) has lots of information on how to use the different kinds of tofu. Tofu textures are pretty self explanatory, but you can make firm tofu even firmer by simply freezing it and boiling it in hot water to create a chewier texture.

Torula Yeast

Nutritional yeast's less beloved cousin. Imparts a 'meaty' flavour is a natural flavour enhancer (like MSG). Give it a go in *CFC Drumsticks* (page 069).

TVP

Textured Vegetable Protein. Comes in a huge variety of shapes and textures to lend itself to as many different kinds of meat. This is one of the most common faux meats available, and can be rehydrated in water, stock or a flavoured broth before being used as meat would in cooking.

Worcestershire

Classically using anchovies, you can usually find an animal-product free worcestershire sauce at most supermarkets, and it's usually the cheaper one, to boot. If you can't and really must have it, try my recipe available on zaccharybird.com.

Zucchini

So you've mistaken zucchini for cucumber at the supermarket again and don't know what to do with it. Sliced and pan-fried with spices is foolproof, but you can also try using a vegetable peeler to create uber-thin strips and marinate in lemon and pepper to serve raw. In the future, raw, soggy zucchini 'noodles' will be seen as an embarrassingly laughable past fad alongside suspending savoury food in jelly and eating meat.

**WARNING! CLASSIFIED:
MYTHICAL MEAT
NOT FOR MERE MORTAL EYES
ALL MORTALS TURN BACK NOW
I'M NOT JOKING
THE BOOK IS OVER FOR YOU
HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT
SERIOUSLY I'M TRUSTING YOU
GO AND ENJOY ONE OF MANY CLASSIC MERE MORTAL MEALS
PLEASE RESPECT THE HONOUR SYSTEM AND DO NOT READ ON
ALL NON-MORTALS, I COULDN'T LEAVE YOU OUT. HERE'S SOME CLASSIC DISHES YOU REMEMBER AND LOVE:**

A close-up photograph of a steak that has been cooked with a rainbow-colored marinade or sauce. The steak is sizzling in a pan, and the colors are vibrant and varied, including shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The text "Unicorn Steak" is overlaid in a white, cursive font on the right side of the image.

Unicorn Steak



Unicorn Steak

For obvious reasons, we are unable to use real unicorn in this recipe – because this is a vegan cookbook and we’d have to kill a whole unicorn to do so. Luckily, tofu, cauliflower and rice paper make for a spot-on substitute. If you recall the last time you tasted unicorn, which I bet you can’t, it usually just tastes a lot like the broth and marinade you’ve chosen to cook it in. Oh, and you can’t forget the main magic of unicorn meat. Peri peri, teriyaki, hoisin, Rice Paper Bacon (page 038) marinade, BBQ sauce, buffalo sauce – the marinade options are endless! Get crazy! Nobody’s going to tell you what a unicorn should or shouldn’t taste like. Except for me, in the recipe below.

Ingredients

Makes 2 steaks

1 large block of firm tofu, frozen
1 small cauliflower
4 sheets of rice paper
1/3 – 1/2 cup marinade
4 cups of broth using your choice of:
Vegetable or chicken/beef stock
Spices: like paprika, oregano, sage, thyme
Fresh or powdered onion and garlic
Soy, fish or worcestershire sauces
Liquid smoke or aminos
Reduced vegetable cooking water
Opt: 4 x food colouring
Opt: a few tablespoons of hummus

Method

1. Prepare your broth. The unicorn magic means that they’re pretty forgiving of whatever combination you land upon or have in the pantry. Pour into a pot and bring to a boil. Place your tofu into the pot, making sure it is covered by the broth. Boil for 20 minutes/until defrosted. Allow the tofu to sit in the broth to soak in the flavours until required.
2. Slice whole cauliflower through the core to make several-centimetre thick steaks.. Trim leaves and the hard exterior of the core. If you muck this up, or simply choose to, you can just tear the cauliflower into very small bites.
3. If going full unicorn, crumble tofu into large chunks in 4 small bowls. Add a few drops of food colouring to each bowl and give a good stir.
4. Take one or two pieces of rice paper and wet all sides before holding them together, pressing the excess water away as they meld. Lay on a plate, and coat one side of this with some of your chosen marinade.
5. Place your cauliflower steak on top, trimming so that it fits neatly inside the diameter of the rice paper. You can spread a spoonful of hummus, if you like.
6. Crumble tofu into large pieces on top, pushing it into any extra crevices. If using rainbow tofu, sprinkle this in strips of each colour to form a rainbow and so that each colour can be pronounced in the final steak.
7. Repeat step 4, placing the new rice paper over the top of the steak, marinade coated side on the inside. Press the edges down to form a parcel. Using wet hands, press and fold the excess edges of the rice paper up and flip the whole parcel upside down so any dubious folded parts are on the bottom.
8. Microwave the steak on a plate for 1–2 minutes to help hold it together and to begin giving the skin texture.
9. Rub the remainder of your marinade into the outside of the steak. Spray a frypan with cooking spray and place over medium–high heat. Cook steak for several minutes on each side, pressing down frequently with a spatula to compress the filling and give it a uniform unicorn texture. Remove when the exterior of the skin is bubbling and beginning to char. Serve with whatever compliments your marinade and be particularly obnoxious about calling it a unicorn steak when people ask what the hell you’re having for dinner.



Mermaid Tail



Mermaid Tail

Method

*Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day.
Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime,
providing he dies before 2048 when the oceans
could be completely fishless. Save a mermaid by
making this completely plant-based version of
the real thing, which tastes remarkably like a
combination of a few of the recipes in this book.*

*Normally I would recommend not using plastic
utensils when frying, but because this recipe is a
seafood dish – any plastic that melts into your
food will only help lend a truly authentic ocean
experience. If you can get your hands on a pinch
of microbeads, people won't be able to tell the
difference between this vegan version and one
you've fished out of the sea.*

Ingredients

Makes 1 mermaid tail

1 batch of **Marinated Blossoms** from **Beer
Battered Banana Blossoms**
1/4 batch **Rice Paper Bacon**
1 batch **Tartare Sauce**
1 small fennel

1. Complete steps 1 – 3 of **Beer Battered Banana Blossoms** (page 078).
2. Use a knife to cut a diamond shape into the fennel bulb around each stem. This should remove each stem and the attached leaves along with a section of white fennel bulb attached to the other side of the stem. This will be the bone for the mermaid. Chop up extra fennel leaves for garnish later.
3. Take the marinated banana blossom and compress it with your hands around the fennel stem, tapering the width towards the end with the fennel leaves to create the shape of a mermaid tail. Continue until all banana blossoms are wrapped around the stem. Wrap with cling wrap and freeze for at least an hour to firm up.
4. Reserve a single sheet of rice paper before completing steps 1 – 3 of **Rice Paper Bacon** (Page 038).
5. Cut two three-sided stars out of the reserved rice paper before also marinating. Two of the points will become the flared bottom of the tail as picture above, and the third point will anchor inside of the tail.
6. Wrap the uncut rice paper around the prepared mermaid, pressing until it adheres without assistance and fully wraps the tail. If you need, blast it in the microwave to hold it together.
7. Prepare a frying pan with cooking spray for frying or pot for deep frying (See **Deep Frying Guide**). The picture above is pan fried, whereas the image on page 036 will give you an idea of the even crazier texture deep frying can give this tail.
If pan frying: Fry over medium-high heat, carefully rotating with tongs several times. Remove when the skin starts to bubble and/or char. Rest on a paper towel.
If deep frying: Make sure the entire tail is coated and sealed with the rice paper. Use tongs to lower into bubbling oil, holding with tongs to ensure it doesn't fall apart. Remove when the skin is bubbling and browned. Rest on a paper towel.
8. In the frying pan, fry the three-sided star as you would **Rice Paper Bacon** (page 038). Remove and rest on a paper towel.
9. Spread either tartare sauce or the chopped ingredients for it (sans mayonnaise) around a plate as artfully as you have the energy left to do so. Slice a lemon wedge for the tail to sit on and place it on the plate.
10. Construct the tail by resting the larger/body end on the lemon wedge. Gently place one of the points of the three-sided star into the open rice paper at the bottom to give the illusion of a whole tail.
11. I used a doll cake-topper from a baking store with a pole to stick into food. It's a nice touch if you can find one. Stab the pole through the top of the body part of the tail (as pictured) to give the illusion of her sitting up, and stab the bottom of the pole that pokes through into the lemon wedge so she sits up straight. Serve and enjoy, if you have the heart to.

Find more recipes on

Facebook: Zacchary Bird

Instagram: @zaccharybird

Twitter: @zaccharybird

Online: zaccharybird.com

In stores: "Vegan Junk Food"

Meals for Mere Mortals

by Zacchary Bird

