

# Transformations: Vegan Recipes You Can Live By Tips and Techniques

Along the way I've learned a lot of useful information about both techniques and ingredients. Every so often I run into something I've never heard of, and I figure if I haven't than my readers probably haven't either. Moreover, there are a lot of ingredients that are used in vegan cooking, and I use the term lightly, that are not common in other cookbooks that I've included information about. Too, I've picked up a lot of useful hints along the ways. As you go through these recipes you'll see items marked in blue, **like this**. Such terms have an entry in this section of this recipe book. Entries are listed in alphabetical order to make them as easy to find as possible.

## **almond milk**

In a number of smoothie recipes, almond milk is called for. Still, while almond milk is vegetarian based, some brands are better than others. Almond Breeze is one of the less objectionable brands. Some of the off brands add things to their mix that are definitely questionable.

In recipes which typically would call for milk, almond milk will usually work. In smoothies it becomes a matter of personal choice. Unless you are trying to create a milk shake like smoothie, in many cases apple or orange juice can be used instead. In some recipes I've even noted this.

The biggest issue is, of course, a vegan recipe book that dairy milk is absolutely out of the question ... for so many reasons.

A viable alternative to almond milk is, in many cases, coconut milk. This is especially true for smoothie recipes.

## **bananas, freezing**

Many recipes, especially smoothies, call for frozen bananas. I buy organic bananas by the case and freeze the whole case. They will last, frozen, for several months. To freeze bananas, remove and compost the banana peeling. NEVER freeze a banana with the peeling on it as it will be a bear to remove. One option is to store whole bananas in freezer bags, stacked several on top of each other. This works but then requires that the bananas be broken apart and sliced before using.

An easier long term strategy is to slice the bananas into 1/4 inch pieces and freeze the slices on parchment paper lined trays. Sliced bananas MUST be pre-frozen as freezing them directly in a freezer bag will cause them to stick together. Once frozen for 24 hours, place the sliced bananas, 1 tray at a time, in freezer bags. You only want to package 1 tray at a time to prevent the bananas from thawing. To use, simply take the required amount of pre-sliced bananas and add them directly to the blender. Using this second method, while more time consuming and labor intensive up front, makes using the frozen bananas much easier as they then do not then have to be separated and sliced.

## **Better Than Milk, milk and half-and-half replacement**

"Better Than Milk" is a typically a soy based milk substitute. There are alternatives to the soy based product. I get one called "Better Than Milk Rice". It's less objectionable than a soy based product which may be made from GMO soy, given that's about all there is available, and even the "Rice" version is not guaranteed to be made without the potential influence of soy. That said, the ingredient label for this product is shown below.

Brown rice syrup solids, maltodextrin, organic evaporated cane juice, natural flavors, calcium carbonate, sea salt, rice flour, rice extract, xanthan gum, titanium dioxide (for color), guar gum, monoglycerides, fructooligosaccharides\*, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (D-alpha tocopherol acetate), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin A (palmitate), folic acid, vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin), rebiana (stevia extract) a natural sweetener. \*Fructooligosaccharides: sugars that occur naturally in plants that promote the growth of beneficial bacteria

I'm not sure what some of the ingredients are but I am sure that, unlike powdered milk, this product is not made from the milk of tortured cows in factory farm prisons.

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### **brown sugar, the ‘best’ of several bad alternatives**

For the record, brown sugar is a combination of both sugar and molasses. Both types of brown sugar are a mixture of sugar and molasses, with dark brown sugar containing more molasses than light brown sugar. Light brown sugar has a delicate flavor while dark brown sugar has a stronger more intense molasses flavor. They can be used interchangeably depending on your personal preference.

That said, the issue becomes the source of the sugar. Not all brown sugar is the same. The cheaper varieties are from sugar made from sugar beets, which is actually a genetically modified product. (See article on cane sugar). The ‘preferred’ kind is from sugar made from cane sugar. (There is also brown sugar made from very objectionable materials such as high fructose corn syrup.) In all of the recipes in this collection, when I say “brown sugar” I’m referring to brown sugar made with cane sugar. Theoretically, this is the least harmful of the sugar bases.

Still, sugar is, at best, a very concentrated food. There is a huge difference between the sugar obtained when chewing on sugar cane (which isn’t all that great) and the concentrated product at the end of the refining process. Whether cane sugar, brown sugar or dark brown sugar, don’t make them a mainstay of your diet. They need to be balanced with a lot of vegetables and fruits, protein, and healthy fats. As with a number of ingredients, my goal is to find the LEAST objectionable option and, in the case of brown sugar, brown sugar made from cane sugar, seems to be the most benign option.

### **cane sugar, versus sugar beet sugar, and the GMO issue**

In an audio I recently listened to I found that virtually all sugar made from sugar beets is made from genetically modified sugar beets, beets that have been engineered to withstands massive doses of the non-selective herbicide spray otherwise known as Roundup weed killer, chemically called glyphosate (pronounced gli-so-fate) which is an organophosphorus compound that is supposed kill anything it is sprayed on.

Cane sugar, on the other hand—and it typically is more expensive, is made from cane sugar, sugar extracted from sugar cane, which is not GMO. In my article on brown sugar, I talked about this too, that many forms of cheap brown sugar are made from beet sugar suggesting that brown cane sugar, from sugar cane, was the preferable choice.

If you ask Monsanto, the difference between beet and cane sugar is inconsequential. Still, there is much public concern about the ever increasing use of GMO products. One of the reasons I use almond milk in my recipes instead of soy milk is for this very reason: that all most all soy is grown from GMO seeds. Like sugar beets, the soy plant will withstand massive doses of glyphosate.

Still, if there’s no issue, why is the Hershey Chocolate Company (among other manufactures) quitting using beet sugar in their products? In an article titled “Hershey dumps sugar beets because of GM concerns” it states:

For decades, the Hershey Company has used sugar made from both sugar beets and sugar cane, but it decided earlier this year to stop buying beet sugar because it comes from genetically modified, or GM, seeds that some consumers don’t like.

[This same article also notes:] David Berg, president and CEO of American Crystal Sugar in Moorhead, Minn., the nation’s largest sugar beet co-op, told members gathered in Fargo, N.D., that the anti-GM movement is one of the industry’s biggest challenges. And Kurt Wickstrom, president and CEO of Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative in Wahpeton, N.D., said that anti-GM groups are a real threat whose claims need to be countered<sup>[1]</sup>.

Imagine that. People don’t like GMO products. There continues to be a major push to force manufactures to label foods with GMO products in them, an effort that Monsanto and several other companies continue to spend millions of dollars to stop GMO labeling. Why the big fuss? Because they realize that a major percentage of consumers would not buy their products if they knew that they contained GMO derived products.



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A Google search an even more disturbing bit of information was revealed:

The [Hershey] company also is transitioning away from artificial to natural ingredients, he said. ... About 55 percent of domestic U.S. Sugar is produced from sugar beets, and nearly 100 percent of the beet seeds are genetically modified to tolerate the herbicide glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup. Dec 27, 2015<sup>[2]</sup>

To be sure, cane sugar is not especially good for you either. In fact, it is considered to be a substance that is as addictive as heroin, at least according to FoodCoach, who provided the picture shown<sup>[3]</sup>. In experiments were lab rats are fed sugar ...

Lab rats with unlimited access to a high-fat, high-carbohydrate diet almost eat themselves to death. They'll voluntarily walk across an electrified plate and endure painful shocks in order to get their junk food hit. In one study, when rats had access to high-fat, high-carbohydrate food for only 1 hour a day, they consumed 65% of their daily calories in one sitting, continuously gorging until the food was removed.

When the food disappeared they withdrew and curled up into a fetal position, soothing themselves with nervous hand-wringing, and becoming excessively twitchy and easily startled. They were hungry for their fix. Without it, they ended up with "the shakes", much like a heroin junkie<sup>[4]</sup>.

That sounds a lot like a drug to me. In many cases stevia, which is an herb, can be used instead of cane sugar. Still, in other cases it cannot. I include cane sugar as the least of several evils in my recipes, rather like including almond milk instead of soy milk.

### **cheese, and cheese substitutes**

I'm reminded of the Christmas commercial where Santa Claus leaves the little girl a treasure trove of gifts, shown.<sup>[5]</sup>

This is a Christmas commercial. Definitely a few years old. Behold the power of cheese. This little girl wakes her parents and brings them to the Christmas tree to see the gifts Santa left, a Motorcycle, jet ski and many big gifts. Dad says those must have been some cookies you left Santa. The little girls Says as she nods her head up and down "I didn't leave him cookies, I left him cheese".<sup>[6]</sup>



Such IS the power of cheese. It's extremely addicting. There are few cases were I actually include cheese in a recipe. In most I just deleted the cheese as unnecessary. In a few, however, you really can't make the dish without cheese. It's not truly vegan at this point. I consider cheese in the 10% part of the 90/10 Program. It's okay on rare occasions. For Mexican dishes in general and entrées like vegetarian lasagna, there's really no way around avoiding cheese—at least not if you want the recipe to taste like something worth eating.

Whatever the case, it's not something I recommend eating much of but once in a while, as long as the vast majority of your diet is vegan, is not going to do any harm. Just do keep in mind that cheese really is HIGHLY addictive.

Of cheese substitutes there are recipes for making 'cheese' from nuts and other vegan ingredients. There are also commercially available cheese substitutes. I've never found either of these options very appealing. This is one of the exceptions to my vegan standards that I've never found an especially good vegan alternative for—and it's not something I especially worry about.

### **cinnamon sticks, reusing**

For some recipes requiring cinnamon sticks, especially when they are added as a flavoring, the sticks can be re-claimed, rinsed off, dried and re-used. The only time you can do this is, in fact, when the stick itself is destroyed. In such a case it would probably be better to use ground cinnamon anyway.

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### eggs

Eggs are an enigma. Emmale buys eggs for my mother and they are laid by chickens that lead a relatively good life, for a chicken. The one thing neither of us will buy eggs laid by chickens in factory farm hell-holes.

To watch the commercials<sup>[7]</sup> you think that the egg is God's gift to mankind. According to the propaganda:

Did you know eggs have 6 grams of high-quality protein and that a protein packed breakfast helps sustain mental and physical energy throughout the day? That's good news for people of any age!<sup>[8]</sup>

The above is Emmale's argument: eggs are a good source of protein. Nevermind the fact that once the egg is cooked that the protein is congealed into a convoluted mass that almost impossible for your body to breakdown into their component amino acids. Too, a raw egg contains 186 mg of cholesterol, as in is a major contributor to clogger arteries.<sup>[9]</sup>

That said, there are some situations were a mashed banana can be used as a binding agent. In other cases, there is no substitute for an egg, and this is especially true in baking. Too, there are egg substitutes but most of them are worse than the real thing.

An occasional egg is certainly not going to be an issue. However, keep in mind that as animals products go, eggs are higher in cholesterol than any other animal product. (Fruits and vegetables don't have cholesterol.) As long as eggs are kept to a bare minimum, they are not going to create a major issue.

As with sugar, flour, sour cream, cheese and mayonnaise, use eggs as a condiment and keep them within the boundary of 10% of your 90/10 Program.

### garam masala

Garam masala is a blend of ground spices common in North India, South India, Pakistan, and other South Asian cuisines. It is typically available in health food stores.

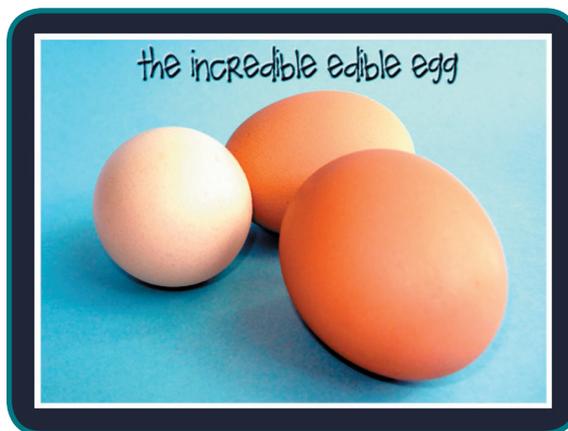
### frozen corn

A few years ago I got some corn seeds from Baker Creek Seed Company. At the time there were only a few varieties that they had that were truly non-GMO. As is happening with so many crops, the proliferation of GMO seeds, in particular corn, soy bean and sugar beet, is cross contaminating heirloom varieties. In the case of corn, this contamination has gone so far as to almost wipe out non-hybrid heirloom varieties. Non-GMO corn is getting VERY hard to find and I salute Baker Creek Seed Company for trying to keep theses seeds true.

Whatever the case, there are multiple references to "frozen corn" in my recipes. In a perfect world I would say to get fresh non-GMO corn on the cob and to cut the ears of corn off. Unfortunately, about the only way you're going to get non-GMO corn is if you grow it yourself. Of my efforts, the end result was pretty sad given that I don't spray vegetables with pesticide to kill borers and other pest. To be sure, trying to find truly organic, pesticide free non-GMO corn is virtually impossible.

I've listed all request for corn as "frozen corn" because this is about a close as you're going to get on any kind of a viable product. It's alms guaranteed to be GMO corn. At this point there's virtually nothing that can be done about that. The damage that Monsanto has done has irretrievably altered this food group forever and it seems unlikely that the damage will ever be able to be undone. To be sure, GMO corn is the 'fittest' of corn, or at least strongest of the species, far more resistant to problems than heirloom corn. Given the ease with which corn cross pollinates, it's virtually guaranteed that heirloom corn will eventually be wiped out altogether.

My references to frozen corn is an undeniable compromise. Like the drop in nutrients from depleted soils, there are some agricultural forces that are beyond, or nearly beyond, stopping. We simply have to learn to deal with the aftermath.



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## ice and frozen cucumbers in recipes

Many recipes, especially for juices, call for ice, usually optionally. As an alternate, slices of frozen cucumber can be used. To make frozen cucumbers, peel cucumbers and place on a large parchment paper lined pan. Freeze for 24 hours. The next day, remove cucumbers and store in plastic freezer bags. Feel free to use these frozen cucumbers, pulverizing them in a blender, whenever ice is called for in juice recipe.

## kiwi fruit, juicing

Kiwi fruit is an odd sort of fruit originally from Australia. To use it in juices peel it first. As a general consideration, slice the peeled fruit and add it to a blender. This juice is much too delicious to send it through the electric juicer and waste any of it. Not that you can't. It's just why waste any of the most delectable of fruits?

## mayonnaise, and mayonnaise substitutes

Mayonnaise is, obviously, not vegan, in that it's made with eggs. It's one of those issues I haven't really resolved, rather like sour cream in very limited quantities. There are vegan mayonnaise substitutes. There are several versions of a produce called Vegenaise which is a soy milk based substitute. It's okay though quite expensive, at least double the cost of regular mayonnaise. There are numerous versions of homemade vegan mayo but they use basically the same ingredients that Vegenaise is made from. In that I use very little mayonnaise in my recipes, I consider it an allowable part of the 10% other things in the 90/10 program. Whether you choose to use mayonnaise or Vegenaise I suspect won't make much of a difference. Again, as I noted, Vegenaise is considerably more expensive.

## mint, fresh, growing your own

No garden is complete without mint. In my garden I have two forms: Cat mint and spearmint. While I'm sure you can use cat mint, I use the spearmint leaves in recipes. Mint will grow in all sorts of conditions and does best given full sun and generous moisture. It can readily be propagated by digging up root clusters and replanting them in containers. Once the roots form they can be planted in the ground.

To use this herb, snip off a few stems from growing plants and snap off the larger, healthier leaves. They only need to be washed if there is debris on the leaves. Once plucked from the stem they can be added to recipes as is and add a delightful cool sensation to whatever they are included in. The only drawback I've found to growing mint is that, come winter, the plants go dormant. As such, leaves can be plucked and dried in a dehydrator during the active growing season. They are not as good as fresh mint but will do in a pinch during the colder months of the year.

## mushrooms, related types: Portabello, crimini and baby bella mushrooms

Ah, the wonders of modern food production methods.

According to myrecipes.com<sup>[10]</sup>, "Botanically, there is not a difference between portabello and crimini mushrooms, and baby bella is just another name for criminis. But in the marketplace, you'll see a difference.

Mushrooms sold as portobellos are larger, and the gills are exposed and dark, because the mushroom is allowed to ripen after being picked. Criminis are smaller, and their gills are covered with a "veil" of mushroom skin. In fact, if the gills are not covered, the crimini is not as fresh as it should be. Both criminis and portobellos are more intensely flavored than their more widely used cousin, the white button mushroom."

In my experience, there are only three mushrooms that I use: The white button mushroom (in most cases), the brown baby bella mushroom, when I need a 'fancier' mushroom, and the relatively large portabella mushroom, when I need a hefty mushroom or a mushroom, for example, for stuffing or as a meat substitute.

## parsley, juicing

Parsley is one of those items that's tough to juice. If you have a Vitamix juicer, you can simply add the parsley to your juicer. You can process parsley through an electric juicer by wrapping it around other pieces of fruit and vegetables. Otherwise, being stringy by nature, most of it simply gets ejected.

It can also be chopped and added to a blender. Once added, pour the juice on top of it and blend on high for at least 30 seconds. There will be some fine chunks that remain. You can drink these, of course, but I prefer to strain such juice through a large sieve into a quart container and push out as much of the juice as is possible. The remaining pulp can then be composted.

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Nevertheless, the ideal way to juice parsley (and cilantro, too), is to process it through a wheatgrass juicer which literally crushes the parsley and squeezes the juice out of it. It doesn't make much juice but what it makes is full strength and quite potent.

### sour cream

As with mayonnaise, sour cream is hardly an ideal food. Still, it's called for in a lot of recipes. I don't really have an optimal substitute for sour cream, yet. My current thinking is to use it when nothing else will do ... in limited quantities.

Not that I'm not in the process of working on this problem. I have a recipe in the Amenities section of my book for **Vegan Sour Cream**. I have yet to test it, though I will the next time I make something calling for sour cream. If it works, I'll note it here and change the recipes that call for it.

### sprouts, growing your own

There are a number of recipes in this collection that require sprouts. Sprouts are truly one of nature's super foods. Most sprouts are easy to make and full of live enzymes. Two of the easiest are alfalfa and mung bean sprouts, readily available, often in bulk, at your local health food store.

To make these, start with a half gallon jar. Add 2-3 tablespoons of alfalfa seeds and up to a quarter of a cup of mung bean sprouts to two different jars. Cover with a screened top, which are also readily available at health food stores. Fill with filtered water and allow to sit overnight. Drain the water and rinse. Invert the jar at a 30-45 degree angle and place in a plastic box—something to catch any dripping water. Rise twice a day, draining each time, with filtered water and, in a few days, you'll have an abundant supply of fresh sprouts.

To use, use a salad tong and place the sprouts in a salad spinner. Rinse well and spin dry. (This is particularly important for alfalfa sprouts). Add to your favorite entrée and enjoy. That's really all there is to it.

Note that there are more complex sprouting systems, but using glass jars is probably the most cost effective system. If you really want to get into it, two excellent books on the subject are Ann Wignmore's "The Sprouting Book: How to Grow and Use Sprouts to Maximize Your Health and Vitality" and Steve Meyerowitz's book "Sprouts: The Miracle Food: The Complete Guide to Sprouting".

### tomato sauce, making your own

You can, of course, always use canned tomato sauce, preferably organic. It depends, I suppose, on your own personal taste. However, at the same time you can also make your own from the **Tomato Sauce** recipe included in the dips and sauces section. The choice is up to you.

### vegetable bouillon, MSG and reading the label carefully

From time to time I include vegetable bouillon in my recipes. I need to note here that when getting vegetable bouillon, your best bet is to get them at your local health food store. At the same time, read the label carefully. Many, in fact most, bouillon products are loaded with MSG (monosodium glutamate) in its many forms. MSG is a known excitotoxin. An excitotoxin is defined as "Any of a group of neurologically active compounds, including glutamate and aspartame, that in high concentrations have detrimental excitatory effects on the central nervous system and may cause injury to nerve cells."<sup>[1]</sup>

More specifically, the American Nutrition association says this about excitotoxins: "In particular, glutamate, aspartate, and cysteine are three amino acids that excite our neurons and can be called "excitotoxins." They are now added in large amounts to our food supply. Glutamate, as monosodium glutamate (MSG) is added to many foods. It excites our taste buds and can make bland food taste wonderful."<sup>[12]</sup>

Honey colony states something even more serious about excitotoxins:

"Excitotoxins cause a brain cell to become very excited and your neurons basically fire spastically until they finally burn out," Lippman explains. But far worse is the neural death that occurs several hours after this[,] his spastic neural firing. Yes, the neurons simply die, as if they've been literally excited to death. Once you lose those neurons, they are gone for good. The damage cannot be repaired.

Excitotoxins also generate extreme levels of free radicals that cause additional cell death. Dr. Russell

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Blaylock, author of the 1995 book *ExcitotoxiCity: The Taste that Kills*, has researched and written extensively on excitotoxins. In 2007, he wrote in his *Blaylock Wellness Report*: “Newer studies have shown that feeding MSG to animals not only dramatically increases the free radicals and lipid peroxidation products in the walls of their arteries, the increase lasted for what would be the equivalent of decades in humans.” In addition, these chemicals can cross the placental barrier, possibly harming the brains of unborn children.<sup>[13]</sup>

One of the reasons I harp so much about eating non-processed foods is because most of these foods are loaded with MSG. It’s VERY nasty stuff.

The vegetable bouillon that I buy is called “Garden Veggie Delicious Broths and Seasoning”. The label says: “Ingredients: Sea Salt, Organic Expeller-Pressed [no heat processed] Palm Oil, Yeast Extract, Onion, Organic Carrot, Lovage, Turmeric, Organic Celery, Maltodextrin, Parsley, Organic Mace Spice.” And NO MSG in ANY form.



## Sources

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- [2] Ibid.
- [3] <http://foodcoachnyc.com/blog/functional-medicine/are-hyperpalatables-as-addictive-as-heroin/>
- [4] Ibid.
- [5] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6wZQBh\\_Bg8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6wZQBh_Bg8)
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