

# THE PEOPLE'S PANTRY

COMMUNITY COOKBOOK





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FOOD IS POLITICAL  
FOOD IS LOVE

# BAKING

For Beginners 

1. Milk

2. Egg 2

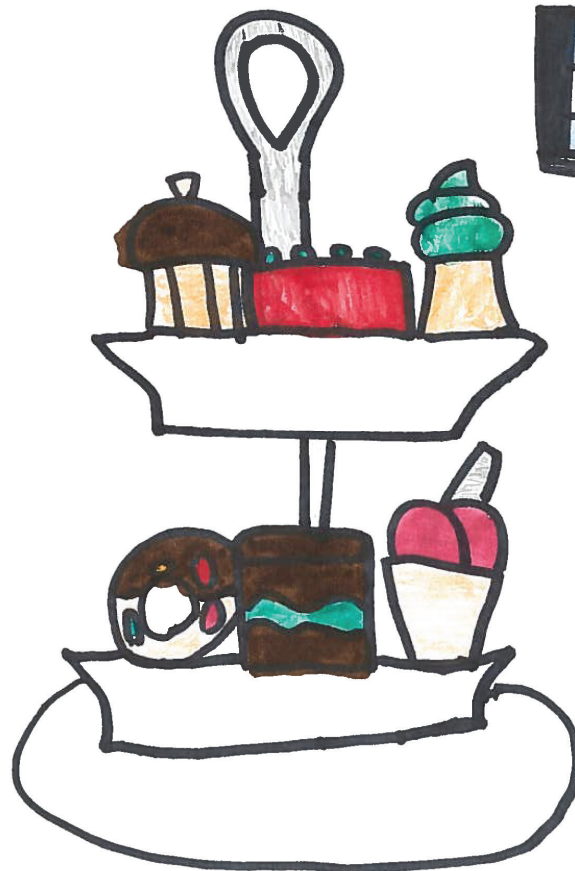
3. Oil

4. flour

5. Sugar

6. Baking powder

Bake for 30 mins



Ingredients

FLOUR

BUTTER

Egg 2

Milk  
Sugar

Coco powder

Rehan Q

## About the Artist

My name is Rehan Quader, I am a student. I am 10 years old. I love to bake. Because when I am upset or happy I love to bake something special. And also share it with friends and family. Baking stuff is so awesome and it is so much fun, even though baking stuff sometimes make happy. I always bake on any kind of special day. Sharing and caring with the baking.

This book is a time capsule and a time machine. Created to commemorate and document a small sample of work by The People's Pantry in and around Tkaronto/The Greater Tkaronto-Attiwandaronia (Hamilton) area during the COVID-19 pandemic, this book is a memory of how we came together as family and in community during times of isolation. To travel forward in time, this book will connect other families and communities, as we hope the meals you prepare and stories you share will bring them together, just as they brought us together too.

Quarantines and lockdowns meant that we couldn't gather to share meals anymore. There was fear of virus spread, hoarding and shortages, loneliness, and hunger. Extreme excess and grave scarcity. The People's Pantry Toronto, like so many other mutual aid organizations in our area, was born out of urgency. People who believe in an alternative and had the means to try. We were never meant to solve the problem, we simply reacted in an emergency.

The emergency is not over. Food insecurity is a preventable issue, and has been an ongoing crisis for years before 2020. Conversations about land sovereignty, environmentalism, labour protections, mental health, and capitalism at large are still in red alert. Let the meals in this book fuel you to keep going, stay involved and engaged. Or, let the meals in this book nourish you as an act of thank you to your body for keeping you here and for pushing onward, amidst it all.

This time capsule remembers the 12-hour days in front of the computer, changing and updating spreadsheet cells, four hour meetings, and emergency meal drop-offs. The time machine hopes for our future, the meals created and shared with friends who are family, ingredients that will be grown at home or by our neighbors, new traditions, stories, and favorites with personal twists.

We dedicate this book in solidarity to those who ask for help in bravery when they need it, and to those who offer it in compassion when they can, no questions asked.

On March 17, 2020, Ontario entered a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the weeks leading up to the first provincial lockdown, Tkaronto/The Greater Tkaronto Area (GTA) experienced an accelerated rise in grocery store overcrowding/violence, resource hoarding, and job loss, all of which resulted in a significant rise in food insecurity in the region. To counter the rising climate of uncertainty, community organizers in Tkaronto created a Facebook group called 'CareMongering-TO: TO Community Response to COVID-19', an online mutual aid platform designed to offset the outburst of COVID-19-based fearmongering in the city. Soon after the group was created, similar Facebook groups started to appear across the GTA and Southern Ontario, eventually emerging across all of Kanata, ultimately sparking the national mutual aid phenomenon now known as 'CareMongering' (Da Costa, 2021; Wood 2020).

Exactly three days before the provincial lockdown was announced, Tkaronto organizers Ellie Ade Kur, Yann Gracia made a post to CareMongering-TO offering free hot meals to anyone in their end of Tkaronto who was in dire need. Ellie wrote:

**Hello! If you're unable to leave the house for safety reasons or are just in need of food, my partner [Yann] and I have been making meals and dropping off in Toronto. We've been doing it for close friends, but want to open up to others- \*\*\*prioritizing folks who are immunocompromised, living with a disability and/or my QT/BIPOC (AK 2020).**

I distinctly remember seeing Ellie's post and thinking "I should do that for people near Burlington", a city located at the southwest outskirts of the GTA, as well as my current place of residence. The next day, I made the following Facebook post myself, first to CareMongering-TO, and then to its sister sites in the Peel region and the city known as Hamilton:

**Hey everyone! Following in Eli AK's lovely footsteps, I am offering free food prep meals to folx in Burlington, Oakville and Hamilton who are unable to leave the house for safety reasons or are simply in need of food, I am prioritizing the elderly, people living with disabilities/ who are immunocompromised, and QT/BIPOC. (Da Costa 2020b)**

Andrea Román Alfaro, another community organizer in Tkaronto, also saw Ellie and Yann's post and decided to join them in cooking food for people in the city, quickly bringing on two other organizers, Michelle Huang and Paul Pritchard. Soon, the six of us were each buying, preparing, and delivering homecooked meals and groceries to various nearby families.

After a couple of weeks, we consolidated our efforts, forming 'The People's Pantry': a volunteer-led, Tkaronto-based community meal program that provides homecooked meals and grocery care packages to people living in or near the GTA who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Free of charge, no questions asked, no fixed address required. In the span of April, our initiative grew rapidly, taking on hundreds of volunteers and eventually evolving to include a total of 9 cities in and around the GTA. To date, we have reached over 30,000 people in Ontario, and raised over \$200,000 in community and provincial funds.

Mostly founded by Black and Brown queer, trans, and feminist organizers, TPP is a QTBIPOC-led mutual aid group committed to food justice. Particularly, we promote community food security (CFS): "universal access to culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate, sustainable food through local non-emergency channels" (Johnston and Baker 2005, 313), while also connecting the problem of hunger to racism, classism, sexism, and overall injustice, using mutual aid to tackle not just food insecurity, but the systems of violence that create it. TPP got its energy from the founders' mutual commitment to an ethic of care, one grounded in our lived desire to secure the survival of our own communities. As described by Ellie: *'We came together collectively to serve our friends, our families, our peers [ . . . ] we're serving a lot of our own communities, we don't operate with this [ . . . ] kind of hierarchical thing, we are people showing up for our people'* (Toronto/Tkaronto Mutual Aid 2020). TPP, in short, is a food justice response to COVID-19 that was mobilized by and for the people of Tkaronto/the GTA.

**Intro by Mariela Libedinsky and Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa**

Please see references on page 74



# ANECDOTES

## FROM OUR

## CHEFS

“My family immigrated to Canada when I was very young. It was important to my parents, especially my mom, to eat traditional dishes at home, and though I didn't understand at the time and wanted to eat more Western foods like my classmates, it was a way for them to preserve our heritage. This is a great comfort food, even when I was a picky child, and can be made in large batches for potlucks and meal prepping. This dish is very popular in the Philippines, with Spanish influence (its name is from the Spanish word "picar" which means "to mince") and can be made to suit your liking, with different minced veggies and in soup or stew varieties.”



**Andrea Zapata**

See recipe for **Filipino Picadillo Stew** on page 39



“This dish is special to me because it was one of the first dishes that I made for The People’s Pantry (TPP) – before we were even called The People’s Pantry. TPP started because two of our co-founders, Ellie and Yann, began offering home-cooked meals to people in Toronto who had been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They made their offer on a local Facebook group called “CareMongering-TO,” a group I was also a member of. The day after I saw their post, I started offering the same thing to people living in or near my city of Burlington, Ontario, which is located at the outskirts of the South-West border of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The lasagna recipe is the first thing I made for requesters, who, at that time, would DM me on Facebook to make their requests. The photo shown here is actually the image I used to spread the word about the mutual aid work I was doing, which eventually became the sister initiative for TPP. We now cover requests for Burlington, Oakville, Hamilton, Milton, Guelph, and Kitchener. I have made this recipe many more times since this photo was taken, and every time I make it, I am reminded of the beauty, power, and importance of mutual aid projects. For me, this recipe is a memento of the moment in time in which TPP started to come to life, and my world was forever changed.”

**Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa**

See recipe for **Simple Vegetable Lasagna** on page 48



# TESTIMONIALS



## FROM

## OUR COMMUNITY



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I am HIV+ and a cancer survivor. The lack of access to the therapies I need has been physically and psychologically difficult. I found out about TPP through a bike organization that helps deliver food. I'm embarrassed to have food insecurity but the process from The People's Pantry made the application simple and clear. The delivery was friendly, respectful, and accommodating.

The veg penne reminded me of my mom's pasta. She has passed and it was delicious and healthy. Great comfort.

I'm on permanent disability so food insecurity is a constant worry. I hope politicians and Canadians fight for food security.

**Domenic Russo**



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The pandemic has affected me kinda both positive and negative ways 'cause in a good way you look at things slightly more different, but has reduced my hours at all 3 jobs.

The People's Pantry has helped reduced my food bill and deliver the food without running around for it. The food I've received—I've loved it all.

**Chris A.**





I'm a multidisciplinary artist, photographer, poet, activist, among other things. I saw some posts from the Caremongering Toronto group and joined. Not much longer I saw a post from Eli about meals being made for people in need and I followed that. I'm a proud, independent Black single mother with health and mobility issues, the longer the pandemic went on the more insecure I felt about being able to provide for my family. With them being home all the time and my food and transportation budget stretched to the max, I needed help and soon. I reached out to People's Pantry and was shocked by how supportive they were and much food they sent me. I was literally in tears that day. Ify Chiwetelu, a CBC reporter, reached out to me for my take on *Lessons in Isolation* for *CBC Now or Never* after seeing me on Facebook. I've been volunteering with The People's Pantry ever since. They are doing amazing work, I'm proud to be a part of it.

I volunteer as a chef/baker for The People's Pantry but when I'm not able to, I'm just there to be supportive. The pandemic has affected me in many ways. I'm a parent of 4, I have to keep things as normal as possible while I self manage. My strong domestic skills came in handy, I've been cooking and baking more than ever! I was home for a while, due to a combination of illnesses and that made it easier for me to adjust, but it's still been difficult to get used to things. I took some time to study some healing modalities which helped me to cop. Fortunately, I saw a psychiatrist before the pandemic and I am being treated for Generalized Anxiety—I'm so grateful!

I am concerned as things are still up in the air globally. I've seen many communities come together and it's been positive but I'm not sure how the 'new normal' is going to affect that. One thing I'm sure of is that everyone should have access to good and healthy food.

**Gail Jordan**

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I heard about [The People's Pantry] on Facebook in the spring and decided to get involved because I had been laid off earlier and had a lot of time on my hands. I also wanted to support the community in ways that I could during the pandemic, and I was inspired by all the mutual aid initiatives starting up at the time.

I am a delivery volunteer—in the warmer months I was mostly doing it by bike (also getting some much-needed exercise in the process!), but in colder months I am delivering by car.

I was laid off due to Ford's budget cuts and not COVID, but the pandemic has made it a lot harder to find work. However, it's also been a blessing in disguise to be able to stay home much more easily and not have the weight of work stress added to pandemic stress. I'm an introvert so it's not as hard for me to be isolated (social media has been really helpful to not feel alone) but I do miss seeing friends and family, and my regular activities.

We can take care of each other. Capitalism makes us believe in the myth of scarcity and individuality, and it's so easy for us to all fall into that way of thinking, no matter what our political views are... it's important for us to reflect on ourselves and how we have bought into this. Let's practice generosity, gratitude, compassion, and build community. Especially important in a time of increased isolation.


### Park Jimin

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This service was recommended to me by a person in my building. I am 52 and very terminally ill. The other residents have many mental health obstacles, low financing, and no cooking skills. My finances were not covering everything every month. Food was hard, not only for me to purchase, but for some of the other residents as well. I used your service and your volunteers have been nothing but pleasant and respectful, which when you are in need of assistance helps your mental state. You have proven over and over we do not need to be embarrassed about asking for assistance and to enjoy things when we can. The food has been so delicious and made my life healthier and happier. Now I get to eat more often and do not need the energy to cook.

Your service is so needed and appreciated and we thank you for what you do for us from the making of the nutritious and very tasty meals to organizing the delivery.

### Anonymous



I've become more anxious, depressed and fearful since the pandemic happened. The abrupt changes to everyday life have been very overwhelming. The price of food has gone up and I'm concerned that my family won't be able to afford food on a regular basis. We're already struggling with groceries right now. My sister and I haven't been able to go to the drop in center for health services, dental, and social supports since the pandemic and it has greatly affected us.

The People's Pantry has helped me put nutritious food on the table and feed my siblings and I. One of the things my sister and I were supposed to do before the pandemic was to attend classes at the diabetic support group to learn how to make healthy meals. We haven't been able to attend yet but The People's Pantry meals have given me some ideas of how to make simple foods. I have already recreated some meals such as two kinds of salads, a quinoa bean edamame meal and a fruit salad bowl that had four ingredients. There was balsamic vinaigrette dressing included in one of the meals and at first I was hesitant to try it because it smelled very strong but, once I did I liked it a lot. It's my go to salad dressing now. My family and I are very grateful for The People's Pantry during the pandemic. It has helped us so much, thank you.

My favourite meal was the grilled chicken breast, green beans, salad and potatoes. My sister's favourite meal was the chicken halves and potatoes.

I hope that the future regarding food security will be more attainable and accessible for marginalized communities and those on social assistance. We deserve to have access to affordable food.

**Alicia**

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The pandemic has affected my family in a negative way. My family has been inside almost a year due to my mother being immune-compromised. It has stopped me from being able to work part time, which has resulted in a struggle to pay bills and buy groceries for my family.



I found The People's Pantry online through a parenting helping page on Facebook. I read such great comments and I thought this may be a great program to help my family. The People's Pantry has helped put amazing nutritious food on my family's table once a week. That means so much. I know my kids and my mother will be eating a good homemade meal.



Our family has been provided meals twice now and we enjoyed the baked chicken meal with mac and cheese. My children love mac and cheese, spaghetti, chicken, and the items we received they absolutely enjoyed.

In the future, I hope that low income families are provided more resources for healthy food to feed their families—maybe even cooking classes that can teach us how to make some great meals at a good cost.



### Anonymous



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The pandemic has affected me both positively and negatively. I lost both my jobs due to the nature of my work being conventions and tourism, but I was also able to take advantage of the time off to stay up late, sleep in, and spend hours with my daughter, playing with her and watching TV, or taking her grocery shopping.

I found The People's Pantry in a Facebook group that was offering help for families needing food during the lockdown, so I applied on a Saturday morning, couldn't believe how easy it was, and the following Friday huge portions of food arrived at my doorstep.

They have helped because I don't have to worry about what's for dinner several times a week, or eating the same things over and over again like pasta or TV dinners. I also don't cook but can now reheat anything! We used to go out for dinner 3 times a week at friends, grandma, etc. but now all dinners fall to me.

Our favourite meals have been the chicken and potatoes, beef stew, tortillas, and of course the homemade cookies.

I hope these programs can continue in some capacity even when life returns to normal. Even if just receiving 1-2 meals a week.



### Angel





When the pandemic hit, my dog was dying and the vet bills were over the top. I had to do some real digging on social media about what services were available, and vet bills took precedence over food.

After attending the Sal Army and food bank and getting nothing but cans of tuna and boxes of spaghetti and rotten produce...I had to find something better.

Found on Facebook, The People's Pantry was offering home cooked meals that they would deliver. What a whole new ball game...rather than feeling degraded from the experience of the food bank and Salvation Army, this experience was uplifting.

The food was good. One meal I can't even say what it was now— it was vegetarian and likely from the Middle East (if spices were any indicator) that was tasty and very unique. The kale salad wasn't my fave, but certainly the ingredients in it made it quite nice and I could tell someone was putting everything they had into it.

A few months ago, The People's Pantry was re-organizing and it was very clearly missed by many who frequent your Facebook room.

The only trouble I have with TPP is to remember when to call in that I need a meal for a particular week. Now I've started using an alarm clock for Sunday's @ noon.


I commend this organization who really are making a difference in people's lives. Not eliminating food insecurity, but recognizing the need and working with what you have is a very worthwhile endeavor.

I have also attended a webinar on how volunteers are to use PPE when preparing food, and the process which is currently used in financing the food and their suppliers.

Well done all around.

**Barry**






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I got involved with TPP thanks to the advice of Scarborough Mutual Aid. At the time of the first lockdown, I was delivering masks as a volunteer with them and mentioned that I could cook some pasta with bolognese sauce for the families involved with the initiative. As this service wasn't available, there they told me to get in touch with the TPP. Using Instagram, I got in touch with the coordinators and my story with the initiative started.

At first I helped delivering grocery packages and soon after I started cooking and delivering meals with the help of my wife Bianca.




I lost my job at the end of March 2020 due to the pandemic. I work in the construction sector and my job involves driving to different locations, and it's also physical. Staying home 24/7 was a big challenge for me and it left me with the feeling of being useless and without a purpose.

Cooking for TPP gave me a purpose, made me feel useful and an active part of a movement to transform and make a better community.




I grew up watching my mother and father cook for the soup kitchen in the city and being part of the monthly drive that distributed groceries and personal care packages. I was born in Brazil and my family still lives there. Cooking for these families that a lot of times are pretty much my neighbors, made me feel closer to my family.

It's really rewarding to receive complements about the food I cook and also just the smile and the gratitude expressed by the recipients is enough to make the time spent shopping, cooking and delivering worth it.




I dare you to not to get hooked to this amazing feeling. And did I mention? There is a huge group of amazing volunteers, most of them I only met virtually but hope to one day meet them all personally to tell them how important every single one of them is.

**Leandro Riboli da Silva & Bianca Bolissian**




I got involved with TPP through one of the founders, Jade. They were my sociology TA back in school and I was inspired to join after seeing their posts on Facebook about cooking meals for neighbours in need without question!

I'm currently on the new requests team, which is a consolidation of the old delivery arranging, delivery coordination, and requests teams. I was on the delivery arranging team before this. Our job is to liaise between volunteers and recipients and to set up deliveries and troubleshoot any issues. 😊



I'm a huge homebody and still live with my parents, so the lockdown didn't hit me that hard socially or financially. However, I work in both aviation (as a flight attendant) and healthcare (as an RN student) so I've gotten to experience both ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, I've witnessed massive layoffs and decreases in flight operations (there's been a lot of talk about whether or not our airline will be able to survive the pandemic), and on the other, I see a lot of burnout among nurses (emotionally and physically) and an overwhelmed healthcare system. It's really heartbreaking either way...

I hope the pandemic has helped people see that we're all in this together. We all need each other more than ever— mental health-wise, food-wise, etc. I hope programs like this will continue after COVID (I know quite a few food justice-related services have popped up over the past year) and that there is more awareness and local funding distributed towards programs like this.



Talking to recipients over the phone and through text has been really eye-opening to say the least. It's really shown how food insecurity affects people in all walks of life for all sorts of reasons. All of the interactions have been super meaningful but the most impactful experience thus far was an hour-long phone call I had with one recipient. They hadn't seen a single person in over a week and appreciated having someone to talk to. We started off talking about their food needs and it shifted into their life story and how they got to where they were today. It was nice learning about the person behind the request because it humanizes the whole experience and reminded me of why we do what we do. 😊

AK






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The pandemic has affected me in a rather negative way. I have had a hard time buying food because of a limited income and the increasing cost of food. Also, being isolated with just me and my son has had a negative effect on both of us— we are both real people persons and miss being around people.

The People's Pantry has enabled us to have delicious food that we could not otherwise afford. You folks also remind me that there are good people doing wonderful things during these crazy times. Honestly, all the food is amazing. Special shout-out to Chef Stewart Borden for the delicious chicken zucchini boats and whoever made the delicious gnocchi and sausage. The fresh veg is also very useful.


I believe that most people are good and want to help each other. We are all in this terrible pandemic together. This too, shall pass.

**Anonymous**




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I originally got involved with The People's Pantry in early May 2020. I was initially a cyclist with The Bike Brigade, making deliveries for people. The Bike Brigade introduced me to a large network of mutual aid and grassroots organizations in Toronto made up of people organizing in their own communities. I wasn't a very strong cyclist (mostly because my tires were very deflated and I didn't own a pump at the time), and I also have a longstanding experience with program coordination and administration, so I decided it made more sense to move to the back-end of TPP instead. I joined the teams who were coordinating work processes, communicating with recipients, and applying for grants while also picking up bike deliveries every once in a while.




My longest-standing work with TPP has been as a member of the requests team. Requests coordinate between chefs, delivery volunteers, and recipients, making sure that deliveries are carried out smoothly. At our busiest times, we were coordinating 70 to 80 deliveries per day. I have now moved into a supporting role for requests, and am responsible for submitting and administering grant applications to fund TPP's operations, but I'm generally here to jump into whatever project we have going on.

The pandemic has really been an, "if not now, then when?" moment for me. I've always admired activist work and studied it in university, but it also seemed out of reach, like I had to have everything figured out in terms of my politics. When the pandemic started, working with TPP helped me make sense of what was happening, and also gave me an opportunity to feel like I could affect change. That's the cool thing I've learned about organizing— it's possible to learn how to organize through doing the work and making mistakes, and ordinary people can build something better together.



I hope for broader societal changes that will guarantee safety, housing, food and a sustainable future for everyone. No one should be going hungry or relying on a fragmented network of services, programs and charities to survive.



**Julia**



# BREAKFAST

# Bite-Size Cottage Cheese Pancakes

**Ready in:** 10 Minutes

**Serves:** 3-4 People

**Total Cost:** \$4

**Chef:** Dara Gellman

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 cup whole oats
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- Vegetable oil (coconut, canola, or similar)

## Credit inspiration:

I first encountered a similar recipe through the Weelicious cookbook and Thekitchn.com but have since made it my own with specific measurements and additional ingredients.



## This food is:

Gluten-Free, Vegetarian

## Preparation:

1. Put all of the ingredients except the oil into a blender - "bullet" style or smaller blenders work best, but use whatever you have. Blend for approximately 30 seconds to 1 minute depending on the strength of your blender, until well blended and you get a smooth-ish or almost smooth mixture. Don't worry if there are little lumps of oats - they will cook up nice and soft when you cook your pancakes.
2. Let the batter sit for about 10 minutes - you'll notice that the batter thickens as it sits.
3. Grease a fry pan and heat on medium heat - don't put your pan on too high a heat as these cook best at a medium temperature.
4. Stir the batter and use a tablespoon measure to pour two tablespoons worth of batter to make one mini pancake, and fit as many pancakes as you comfortably can in the pan.
5. Cook on one side until the top of the pancake appears bubbled and somewhat set, and the underside appears lightly browned - about 1-2 minutes.
6. Flip over and finish cooking for another minute or so until the second side is lightly browned.
7. Cooked pancakes will have a medium firm and springy texture. Keep warm while you make the rest of the batch.
8. To reheat, pop into a toaster, toaster oven, or reheat on a pan.

# Tofu Scrambler

**Ready in:** 20 Minutes

**Serves:** 4 People

**Total Cost:** \$8

**Region:** North America

**Chef:** Dara Gellman

## Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon light miso
- 1 tablespoon tamari (or soy sauce)
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¾ teaspoon dried Italian herb mix
- ¼ teaspoon kala namak (or black salt) - optional
- 1 block firm tofu, crumbled
- ¼ cup water or vegetable stock
- 2 teaspoon olive or vegetable oil
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 2 cups shredded veggies of your choice, such as carrots, zucchini, mushrooms, kale, or spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste



## This food is:

Dairy-Free, Vegan, Gluten-Free, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Probably every vegetarian restaurant I have ever eaten at!

## Preparation:

1. Create the flavour paste: In a small bowl, mix the miso, tamari, nutritional yeast, the remaining dried herbs and spices, and the water or vegetable stock until you have a smooth paste. Set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a fry pan at medium low heat. Sauté the sliced green onions for a couple of minutes until tender.

3. Increase the heat to medium, add the shredded vegetables and sauté for 3-4 minutes.

4. Add in the crumbled tofu. Drizzle in the flavour paste and stir well until everything is evenly mixed. Increase the heat to medium high and sauté the mixture for an additional 5-7 minutes or so until the vegetables are tender and until the mixture is about the same consistency as scrambled eggs (depending on which veggies you are using may make this step shorter or longer). If you need additional liquid, add

another tablespoon of water or veggie stock, and if things seem too damp, cook for a few minutes longer until the scrambler is a bit drier. This recipe is very forgiving!

5. Taste, season well with salt and pepper, and enjoy!

## Recipe Notes:

Tofu Scrambler is one of those essential recipes to have in your plant based repertoire. If you're not used to eating tofu, you can think of this dish as a savoury, protein-rich substitute for scrambled eggs, with even more versatility. It's quick to make, can be made ahead of time as part of your meal prep, and reheats well in a pan or in the microwave. You can change what vegetables you use based on what you have on hand, or even leave them out all together. If you fancy different flavours, swap out some of the spices to create different versions - see the options below. Tofu scrambler is great as part of a breakfast spread, tucked into a tortilla or English muffin, or eaten with chapati, pita bread, or rice, with some steamed veggies or salad on the side.

Kala Namak, or Black Salt, is a sulphurous salt widely available at South Indian grocers. It imparts an 'eggy' flavour, but can easily be left out with no detriment to the recipe. Nutritional yeast is also easily found at health food stores and adds to the deep savoury flavour of this scrambler.

Optional versions: Swap out the turmeric, mixed herbs, and vegetable suggestions for the following:

### Mexican inspired

Use chili or fajita spices, and add tomatoes, peppers, and corn

### Greek inspired

Use dried oregano, and add sliced olives, spinach, and tomatoes

### Indian inspired

Use curry powder, and add chopped coriander and tomatoes

## Personal Anecdote:

*"I have always loved this dish because it's so savoury and filling, and it goes so well with so many other things as part of a vegetarian meal. When I was pregnant with my son, I used to wake up so incredibly hungry! So I would heat up some of this tofu scrambler and put it into a toasted english muffin along with a slice of cheese, and I would be in a deeply satisfying breakfast heaven!"*



# SIDES



# Mujuaddara (Lentil Rice)

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 4 People

**Total Cost:** \$8

**Region:** Middle East

**Chef:** Siue Moffat

## Ingredients:

- ¾ cup brown rice
- 1 cup brown or green lentils
- 3 large yellow onions (or red onion)
- ¼ cup or less of vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste



## This food is:

Dairy-Free, Vegan, Diabetic-Friendly, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

This recipe is taken from a cook zine I wrote in the '90s.

## Preparation:

1. Cook the rice in scant 1 ½ cups of water.
2. Cook the lentils in about 1 ½ cups of water.
3. Dice and brown (caramelize) the onions with oil in a frying pan. This takes quite a bit of oil - you can use a couple tablespoons up to ¼ cup. It takes quite a bit of time as well as you cook on low to medium low to help brown at a slow speed.
4. When the lentils and rice are done, mix them together.
5. When the onions are done, mix half of these into the rice/lentils. Add cumin, coriander, about ½ tsp salt and some pepper. Add the remaining half of the onions on top of the dish.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“Back in the 80s Windsor Ontario had little to no Middle Eastern food, so I fell in love with this dish when I came to Toronto. Sometimes when I’m lazy I just cook the rice and lentils together (add enough water!).”*

# Heart Beet Soup

AKA, Hearty Root Vegetable Borscht

**Ready in:** 50 Minutes

**Serves:** 6 People

**Total Cost:** \$20

**Region:** Ukraine/Russia

**Chef:** Bronwyn Cawker

## Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon canola (or other neutral) oil
- 1 onion, small dice
- 1 bulb garlic, finely chopped
- 3 stalks celery, small dice
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- ½ head red or green cabbage, thinly shredded
- 4 red beets, medium dice
- 2 carrots, medium dice
- 2 parsnips, medium dice
- 2 sweet potatoes, medium dice
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 litre (4 cups) vegetable stock
- 1 can cooked kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- Salt, pepper, and red wine vinegar to taste
- ½ bunch dill, finely chopped (plus extra for topping soup)
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Sour cream or yogurt (optional)

## Preparation:

1. In a large pot over medium heat, add oil. Once heated, add in onions, garlic, and a small pinch of salt. Sauté until translucent and fragrant, about 3 minutes.
2. Add in celery, cabbage, and another small pinch of salt. Sauté until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add beets, carrots, parsnips, and sweet potato. Sauté until slightly softened, about 8 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and cook for 2 more minutes.
4. Add in vegetable stock. Bring soup to boil and turn down heat to a simmer, cooking until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.
5. Add in beans, a pinch of salt, and pepper. Heat through for about 5 minutes.



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Vegan, Halal, Kosher, High Blood Pressure-friendly, Diabetic-friendly, Gluten-free, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Probably every vegetarian restaurant I have ever eaten at!

6. Turn off heat. Using a hand blender, blend the soup until it is halfway pureed and has a bit of body.
7. Stir in the chopped dill, lemon juice and zest.
8. Adjust the soup to taste with extra salt, pepper, and red wine vinegar if needed.
9. Garnish soup with a spoonful of sour cream (or yogurt) and sprinkle with lots of extra dill. Serve with toasted bread or a biscuit to mop it up!

## Recipe Notes:

You can make your own vegetable stock with onion skins, herb stems, celery, parsnip, carrot, sweet potato, garlic, and leek trimmings. Place all of the trimmings in a small pot, fill with water and add in aromatics of your choice for added flavour (bay leaves, more garlic, herbs, peppercorns). Bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes then strain! You can even keep a bag of trimmings in a bag in your freezer and once it's full you can make a batch of vegetable stock.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“I work as a Community Chef where I serve meals to hundreds of food insecure individuals on a daily basis. After I served this for lunch one day, one of our community members came up to me with tears in her eyes. I asked her if she was okay, and she was! She was reminiscing about how this borscht tasted exactly like her Mom's version that she grew up eating. This is such an amazing reminder of the power of food. While this may appear as a simple bowl of soup, people can feel seen, nourished, and even relive our happiest memories of our loved ones through food.”*

# Candied Pecan Salad

**Ready in:** 10 Minutes

**Serves:** 20 People

**Total Cost:** \$15

**Chef:** Stewart Borden

## Ingredients:

- 4 cups pecan chunks
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 4 cups strawberries, halved with greens cut off
- 1 big bag arugula (or other lettuce)
- 1 cup olive oil
- ⅓ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Salt, pepper to taste
- Sesame or hemp seeds (optional)



## This food is:

Vegan, Halal, Kosher, High Blood Pressure-friendly, Vegetarian

## Preparation:

1. If pecans aren't broken, smash whole pecans into bits (put in a plastic bag and hit with a rolling pin). Mix with oil, salt, and sugar. Lay out on parchment baking sheets and bake at 350 ° F for 10 min.
2. Make dressing: whisk olive oil, balsamic, sugar, salt, and pepper.
3. Wash lettuce, mix with dressing. Top with strawberries, pecans, and seeds.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“The kids like this one a lot - it's the sweet pecans that do it!”*

# Beet Salad

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 3-5 People

**Total Cost:** \$10

**Region:** Persian

**Chef:** Maryam ZM

## Ingredients

- 3 medium size cooked beets
- 1 large tomato (chopped)
- 1/3 cup cooked lentils
- 1/3 cup cooked quinoa
- 1/2 chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

## Credit Inspiration

A Persian/Canadian restaurant in Toronto named Camros

## Preparation:

1. In a large bowl grate the cooked beets and add the cooked lentil, cooked quinoa, chopped tomato and lastly chopped parsley.
2. Now is the time to slowly toss all the ingredients together with olive oil, salt, pepper and lemon juice.

The salad is ready, bon appétit!



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Vegan, Halal, Kosher, High Blood Pressure-friendly, Diabetic-friendly, Gluten-free, Vegetarian

## Personal Anecdote:

*“I used to go to a restaurant on Yonge and Bloor area with my family and had this salad. I loved it so much so I learned how to make it but change it, in my own way.”*

# Buttery Dinner Rolls

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 18 People

**Total Cost:** \$10

**Chef:** Sandy Halliday

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon active-dry yeast
- 3 ½ to 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- Extra melted butter, for brushing on top



## This food is:

Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Ali, 1-Hour Soft and Buttery Dinner Rolls  
Gimmesomeoven.com

## Preparation:

1. Start by preheating the oven to 400 ° F and spraying a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Mix together the water and melted butter until combined. Add the milk and water and stir again.

2. This should be done in a microwave safe bowl or measuring cup. Heat the liquid mixture in the microwave for about 1 minute and check the temperature to make sure it reaches 110 ° F. Any hotter will kill the yeast and any cooler will not let the yeast do its magic. If it's not warm enough, reheat it in short bursts (10 seconds) and retest the temperature. Also, make sure the butter is fully melted.

3. Add the yeast to the warmed liquid by sprinkling it on the top and a little store with a fork. Then let it sit and let the yeast do its magic (it should look foamy - about 5 minutes).

4. Mix together 3 ½ cups flour (not all of the flour) and the salt in a separate bowl. Add the foamy liquid and stir until a dough forms.

5. Once the dough is formed, dump it on a clean, floured surface (to prevent sticking). Knead the dough for 5 to 7 minutes, or until the dough is smooth. If the dough is sticky while kneading, add ½ cup of extra flour.

6. It's time for the first rise! Spray a clean bowl with oil and put the dough in the bowl. Cover the bowl with a damp towel or paper towel. Let the dough sit for 15 minutes— it should rise a bit. Be sure to keep it in a draft-free place to rise!

7. After rising, “punch” the dough down gently. Pour the dough out on a clean surface (flour lightly if needed). Divide the dough into 15 to 18 pieces.

Try to make them equal in size for even baking. Make each piece into a ball and put them into the prepared baking dish. Cover the baking dish with a damp towel or paper towel and let the buns rise for an additional 15-20 minutes.

8. Now it's time to bake. Remove the towel/paper towel and bake for 15 minutes. The rolls should get lightly golden on the top.

9. While still warm, brush the tops of buns with more melted butter. Finish cooling on a wire rack.

10. Let cool and package up!

### Recipe Notes:

I had an aluminum cake pan left over from another recipe, so I decided to make some rolls for a family. These were pretty quick and easy and smelled SO GOOD while baking. I baked directly in the aluminum pan so they were easy to transport. You can use a stand mixer if you have one. I did not feel like pulling mine out, so I made these by hand.

### Personal Anecdote:

*“I bought some bread machine yeast at the beginning of the pandemic when it was really hard to find. I thought this recipe would be a good way to use up my remaining yeast, since it is now easy to find in stores. I wish I made a second batch for myself!”*





# MAINS

# Oven-Baked Chicken Thighs & Breasts

**Ready in:** 70 minutes + additional hours marinating

**Serves:** 6 People

**Total Cost:** \$63

**Chef:** Sandy Halliday

## Ingredients:

- 6 to 8 bone-in, skinless chicken thighs, about 1 ½ to 2 pounds (or 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts or tender or thighs)

### Rub:

- 1 ½ teaspoons smoked or sweet paprika
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried basil
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried rosemary

### Marinade:

- 1-1 ½ cups extra virgin olive oil depending on preference
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 3 garlic cloves minced or ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

## Preparation:

1. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the chicken - there is no salt or pepper in the dry rub, so it's good to get this first level of seasoning.
2. Mix together the paprika, thyme, basil, and rosemary then rub it on all sides of the chicken.
3. Put the chicken in a ziplock bag or another container while you make the marinade.
4. To make the marinade, stir together oil, lemon juice, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, salt, and pepper in a bowl or a large measuring cup. Once it's all mixed together, pour the marinade over the chicken in the ziplock bag or container.
5. Marinate the chicken in the fridge for at least 30 minutes. Ideal marinating time is 4-5 hours, or even let it get yummy overnight!



## This food is:

Meat

## Credit inspiration:

Katerina, Marinated Oven Baked Chicken Thighs, diethood.com and Melissa Stadler, The Best Chicken Marinade Recipe, Modernhoney.com

6. Cook the chicken at 425 ° F for 35 minutes on a baking sheet (I lined mine with parchment so it wouldn't stick, but you don't have to). Check the temperature of the chicken to make sure it reaches 165 ° F.
7. Let chicken cool before packaging.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This was the recipe I made for my first family with TPP. It smelled so good as it baked. I made way too much chicken for the family, but I hope it was yummy!”*

# Shrimp Tostadas

**Ready in:** 30 Minutes

**Serves:** 6 People

**Total Cost:** \$21

**Region:** Mexico

**Chef:** Jan

## Ingredients:

- 6 corn tortillas
- 1 lb peeled and deveined shrimp
- ½ of an English cucumber
- 2 medium tomatoes
- 1 medium red onion
- 1 avocado
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon paprika or chilli pepper (optional)
- 2 teaspoons taco seasoning (optional, eg. Great Value Taco Seasoning Mix, low-sodium version)
- Juice of 1 lime
- Cooking oil



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Diabetic-friendly, Gluten-free, Seafood

## Credit inspiration:

Greg Perez, Shrimp & Avocado Tostadas, Tasty.co

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 ° F (for baking option).
2. Brush cooking oil on each side of the corn tortillas.
3. Place tortillas on a parchment-lined pan and bake for 5 minutes on one side (baking option). For a non-baking option, heat the corn tortillas on the stove until crispy on both sides.
4. Heat cooking oil in a pan. Add salt, pepper, and taco seasoning (optional) to uncooked shrimp and mix. Once the pan is heated, add the shrimp and cook. Once the shrimp is cooked (shrimp should be opaque white, usually takes 3-4 minutes on each side on medium-high heat), place in a bowl to cool.
5. While the shrimp is cooking, cut the cucumber, tomato, avocado, and red onion into diced cubes and place them into a bowl. Set aside.
6. Cut each shrimp into half, and add to the bowl with the vegetables.
7. Add the juice of one lime to the bowl, and salt/pepper/paprika or chilli pepper to taste.
8. Mix to combine.
9. Add mixture to tortilla and serve immediately!

# Coconut Curry Shrimp

**Ready in:** 30 Minutes

**Serves:** 4-6 People

**Total Cost:** \$20

**Region:** Creole

**Chef:** Jan

## Ingredients:

- 1 lb shrimp peeled and deveined
- 13.5 oz (400 mL) can of light coconut milk (e.g. Thai Kitchen Coconut Milk Lite)
- Kosher salt and pepper to taste
- Cooking oil
- 1 small yellow onion
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder or 3 cloves of chopped garlic
- Cilantro for garnish
- Up to 1 teaspoon chili powder or paprika



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Kosher, Seafood

## Credit inspiration:

Matt Ciampa & Kelly Paige, Coconut Curry Shrimp, Tasty.co

## Preparation:

1. Add salt and pepper to shrimp and mix to combine.
2. Heat cooking oil in a pan on medium-high heat. Once heated, add shrimp and cook for 3-4 minutes on each side until fully cooked (should be opaque white). Remove from the pan and set aside.
3. Dice the bell pepper and yellow onion.
4. Heat cooking oil in the pan on medium-high heat. Add the diced vegetables to the pan and cook for 5 minutes until softened.
5. Add the coconut milk, curry powder, lime juice, salt, pepper, soy sauce, garlic powder, and chili powder/paprika.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer the curry for 7-10 minutes.
7. Add the shrimp and stir to combine.
8. Add cilantro for garnish, and serve with your favourite rice, sweet potatoes, roti, or bread.

# Lasagna

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 8 People

**Total Cost:** \$25

**Region:** Italy

**Chef:** Jan

## Ingredients:

- 1 pack of lasagna sheets (12-15 noodles)
- 2 bottles (650 mL each) of Bolognese sauce (eg. Classico bolognese sauce, or your favourite)
- Tomato/marinara sauce with 1 lb of cooked ground beef/chicken/turkey/vegetarian "meat" or omit meat for vegetarian option)
- 475 grams (2 cups) of ricotta
- 3 cups of shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 bell peppers (any colour) diced
- 227 grams (¾ cup) of mushrooms chopped
- 2 cups spinach
- 1 small yellow onion finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic finely chopped
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Cooking oil
- 2 teaspoons of dried herbs (eg. Italian seasoning, oregano, basil, or a mix of them)
- up to 2 teaspoons of red chili flakes (optional, depending on your desired spice level).



## This food is:

Vegetarian, Meat

*For a vegetarian option, add more veggies such as an extra bell pepper, 1 small carrot, or 1 zucchini, diced.*

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 ° F. Grease a 9 x 13 inch baking pan with a light coat of oil spray.
2. Cook lasagna sheets as per package instructions.
3. Heat cooking oil in a large pan over medium-high heat.
4. Add onions, garlic, and chili flakes to the pan and cook until softened (4-5 minutes).
5. Add the bell peppers and mushrooms to the pan and cook for another 5-6 minutes until veggies are cooked.
6. Add Bolognese sauce, or tomato sauce with COOKED ground meat/vegetarian "meat", or tomato sauce alone (if omitting the meat) to the pan and stir to combine.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste. Allow sauce to simmer on low heat for 10 minutes, and stir occasionally.
8. In a separate pan, add cooking oil over medium heat. Add spinach and cook until wilted (2-3 minutes). Remove from heat and add to a large bowl.
9. Once spinach has cooled, add ricotta, 1 cup of the mozzarella, basil, pepper, salt. Mix to combine.
10. At the bottom of the baking dish, spread ⅓ of the tomato sauce. Top with ⅓ of the noodles, then spread ½ of the cheese mixture. Repeat with another ⅓ of the sauce, ⅓ of the noodles, and remaining cheese mixture. Finish with the remaining noodles, sauce, and mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle basil on top.

11. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the cheese is golden brown and the sauce is bubbling.

12. Slice and serve with your favourite side dish or salad.

Enjoy!

### **Personal Anecdote:**

*“When I think of comfort food, I think of a warm slice of lasagna. It's one of those dishes that can instantly put me in a good mood, and I always make it for Mother's Day because it's one of my mom's favourite dishes! This recipe is easy to make, and can easily be turned vegetarian by omitting the Bolognese sauce and replacing it with your favourite tomato sauce and more veggies.”*

# Baked Tofu With Awesome Sauce

Ready in: 35 Minutes

Serves: 3-4 People

Total Cost: \$12

**Chef:** Siue Moffat

## Ingredients:

### Marinade

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon cooking oil
- 1 teaspoon water
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup (or sweetener of your choice)
- 1 garlic clove, minced or pressed

### Sauce

- ½ cup finely ground peanuts (or peanut butter)
- 16 oz tomatoes/pureed tomatoes/tomato sauce
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin

*Feel free to add more of each spice if you wish!*



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Vegan, Diabetic-friendly, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

This recipe is taken from a cook zine I wrote in the '90s.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“I've been making this recipe for 25 years! Definitely a keeper!”*

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 ° F.
2. Cut the block of tofu into ½ or ¼ inch slices.
3. Bake the tofu for 15 - 20 minutes until well browned.
4. While the tofu is baking, prepare the sauce. Sauté the garlic for a few minutes in a little water then add the tomatoes (if whole or diced, mash with a fork.)
5. Add the peanut butter or ground peanuts and spices to the saucepan. Heat up, simmer, melt the peanut butter.
6. Serve the sauce over the tofu with rice or noodles. This sauce can be used for all kinds of things.

# Filipino Picadillo Stew

**Ready in:** 30 Minutes

**Serves:** 4-6 People

**Total Cost:** \$20

**Region:** Phillipines

**Chef:** Andrea Zapata

## Ingredients:

- 1 ½ lb ground beef/halal beef/or pork
- 2 potatoes (diced)
- 2 carrots (diced)
- 2 tablespoon raisins
- ½ cup peas
- 1 onion (diced)
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- ½ cup crushed tomatoes
- ½ cup water or beef broth
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (optional)
- Salt + pepper to taste



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Halal, Meat

## Credit inspiration:

Lalaine, Picadillo Soup, [kawalingpinoy.com](http://kawalingpinoy.com)

## Preparation:

1. Heat oil in a wok or large pan, add onions and garlic and cook until soft.
2. In batches, add ground beef/pork and cook until brown, draining excess fat when needed.
3. Add fish sauce, tomatoes, tomato sauce, and cook 1-2 minutes, stirring and mashing to release juices.
4. Add water and broth and bring to a boil. Lower heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.



# Kf-Siue Vegan Chicken

Ready in: 3 Hours

Serves: 5 People

Total Cost: \$13-18

**Chef:** Siue Moffat

## Ingredients:

### The Chick'n:

- 400 grams canned chickpeas (including water)
- (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  regular sized can)
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon bouillon powder
- 1 tablespoon white or apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup silken tofu
- 200 grams (scant 1 cup) vital wheat gluten
- Plus oil for brushing and lots of oil for deep frying
- 

### The "Egg" Dipping:

- 4 tablespoons gram/chickpea flour
  - 200 ml (scant 1 cup) vegan milk
  - 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sriracha
- OR: prepare  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of your favourite vegan egg like JUST Egg, VeganEgg, Vegg, or Eggcitable

### The Coating:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  tablespoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon basil
- $\frac{1}{3}$  tablespoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon celery salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 4 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 tablespoon white pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon sage
- 1 tablespoon garlic granules
- 2 cups flour

## Preparation:

### To make the vegan chicken (layered seitan):

1. In a blender or food processor, combine the chickpeas (including their soaking water), water, bouillon powder, vinegar, onion powder, garlic powder and silken tofu. Blend until very smooth.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with the dough hook, or with the dough blade in a food processor, combine the vital wheat gluten and the blended wet stuff. Knead on medium speed for no less than 5 minutes. The seitan dough should be smooth and stretchy.
3. Cover the mixing bowl and leave to rest for ten minutes.
4. Remove the dough and slice into three even sized pieces. Set aside two of the pieces and cover. Take the one piece of dough and slice it into six separate pieces (roughly the same size is fine).
5. Lay out a piece of baking parchment paper

and place the dough on the left hand side of the parchment, then fold over to cover the dough. With a rolling pin, roll out the dough as thinly as you can. Unfold the parchment and peel off the thin piece of seitan. Stretch it out with your fingers and place it flat on a plate. Brush it very lightly with vegetable oil.

6. Repeat the process with the next piece of dough to make another layer. Push down lightly with the flat of your hand to remove any air bubbles between the two pieces of seitan. Brush the top piece lightly with oil then repeat the process with the remaining small pieces of dough.

7. Once all six small pieces of dough are layered, stretch the top piece of dough down and over the other layers to envelop them and tuck under the bottom layer. Place the layered piece of seitan on a new piece of baking parchment and fold it up tightly. Wrap tightly with tin foil and set aside.

8. Repeat the process with the other two large pieces of dough.

9. Bring water to boil in a steamer and place all three pieces of seitan in the steamer. Steam for a total of 1 ½ hours, flipping and moving the pieces around two times.

10. Once the seitan is steamed, carefully remove it from the steamer and allow it to cool to room temperature (20 minutes) before placing in the fridge for at least an hour. Do not unwrap.

11. Once fully cooled, unwrap the seitan and tear apart or slice into finger size pieces.

If not using right away, keep it sealed in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for 2 months.

Prep for frying: Make the “egg” dipping

1. Mix the ingredients together or make about ¾ cup of vegan egg. Pour into a bowl that will fit the chick'n pieces.

Prep for frying: Make the coating

1. Grind all the spices in a processor, coffee grinder or blender. Mix with flour. Pour half of this mixture onto a plate. You might use more.

Fry the chick'n:

1. Fill a big pot with vegetable oil (canola or corn). While the oil heats to 350 ° F coat the chick'n as follows.

2. Using your left hand to pick up chick'n pieces, dredge in flour coating, transfer with right hand to dredge in “egg” dipping, then transfer to left hand to dredge in flour coating again. Coat all pieces and begin frying as soon as the oil is ready.

3. Fry the pieces for 2-4 minutes until golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

4. If there is flour coating left, throw away the clumps and freeze the rest in a container for use in future.

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## This food is:

Vegan, Dairy-free, Vegetarian, Diabetic-friendly

## Credit inspiration:

The coating is inspired from the supposed secret KFC spices recipe posted on Wikipedia.

Richard, Vegan Fried Chicken, schoolnightvegan.com and KFC Original Recipe, wikipedia.org



Pictured: Raw chick'n without coating

# Pulled Pork Over Smashed Potatoes

Ready in: 6 Hours

Serves: 20 People

Total Cost: \$50

**Chef:** Stewart Borden

## Ingredients:

- 1 pork shoulder/butt boneless (about 8 lbs)

### For the rub:

- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika (or regular paprika)
- 2 tablespoons cumin
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons salt & pepper
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 cups beer, or water
- 3 cups hickory bbq sauce, or any smoked bbq sauce
- 20 yellow potatoes
- 1 cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives, or parsley, or thyme, or green onions



## Credit Inspiration

Ellas Meat Market

## Preparation:

1. Mix rub ingredients, and rub all over pork shoulder
2. Heat oil in dutch oven (or large thick pot with a lid). Sear one side of pork (3min), flip and sear the other side (3min). Add beer, or liquid to pot.
3. Cover and put in 300 ° F oven for 3 hours. Uncover, and put back in oven for 2 hours or more if needed. Internal temp should be 190-195 ° F (this is when the meat will be most tender). Let cool (30min).
4. Bake potatoes for 1 hour at 400 ° F. Put in serving pans, cut with a knife and smash down. Pour melted butter over potatoes, and then salt & pepper and chives.
5. Pull the pork - using forks or hands, pull the pork apart. Throw out any fat pieces, usually about ½ cup's worth. Put back in pot, add bbq sauce and mix well. Place over baked potatoes. Serve with Polish pickles.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“In my view, this dish is the best meat value for money. It is by far the cheapest cut of meat (\$3.99 lb). You can serve 20 people delicious servings of meat very cost-effectively. Also, once I got over the nervousness of asking a butcher for a whole pork shoulder, it is very easy to prepare. It is one of the favourites of the shelter we deliver to.”*

# Charred Chicken Over Roasted Root Vegetables

Ready in: 60 Minutes

Serves: 20 People

Total Cost: \$80

**Chef:** Stewart Borden

## Ingredients

- 10 carrots, peeled, 1 inch cubes
- 10 parsnips, peeled, 1 inch cubes
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, 1 inch cubes
- 10 yellow potatoes, 1 inch cubes
- 5 yams, peeled, 1 inch cubes
- 20 Brussel sprouts, halved
- 10 smaller red onions, peeled, quartered, held together by root end
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled (optional)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ tablespoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 20 chicken thighs with skin and bone-in
- 1 ¼ cups chicken rub (like Cool Runnings)
- ¼ cup canola oil for the grill
- Parsley



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Halal, Kosher, Gluten-free, Meat

## Preparation:

1. Oil bbq grates (with canola oil rag or spray Pam). Turn on bbq on high for 10 mins.
2. In a big bowl, mix all the vegetables with olive oil, salt, pepper, thyme. Spread out on 3 large parchment covered baking sheets. Oven roast on upper racks at 375 ° F for 40 min, flipping once, until soft.
3. Cover chicken thighs with chicken seasoning or make your own rub with ¼ cup of each: paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, dry mustard.
4. Turn bbq to medium low, char each side of chicken (5 min per side). Remove. Put on baking sheets. Put in 350 degree F oven for 20-30 minutes till done, internal temperature of 165 ° F.
5. Place roasted vegetables in a container. Cover with chicken pieces, and pour any drippings over chicken. Sprinkle with parsley

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This is one of the most-liked dishes I prepare for large groups. The chicken stays super-moist as it is only charred on the bbq, and the rest is done in the oven so it keeps the drippings. Easily halal using halal chicken.”*

# Shepherd's Pie

**Ready in:** 90 Minutes

**Serves:** 8 People

**Total Cost:** \$21

**Chef:** Sandy Halliday

## Ingredients:

### For the potatoes:

- 1 ½ pounds russet potatoes
- ¼ cup half-and-half
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg yolk

### For the meat filling:

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons freshly chopped rosemary leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
- ½ cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- ½ cup fresh or frozen English peas



## This food is:

Meat

## Credit inspiration:

Alton Brown, Shepherd's Pie, Foodnetwork.com

## Preparation:

1. Make the mashed potatoes. Peel and cut the potatoes (about ½ in pieces). Put the cut potatoes in a pot and cover with cold water (don't use warm or hot water!) Bring the potatoes to a boil over high heat and cover.

2. Once the potatoes start to boil, take off the cover and lower the heat. You want to keep the water simmering. Cook until the potatoes are tender (check by crushing one with tongs). This should take about 10-15 minutes.

3. Warm the half-and-half and butter in the microwave until warmed through, about 35 seconds.

4. Drain the potatoes when done and return them to the saucepan (make sure it's not on the hot stovetop surface). Mash the potatoes first, then add the half and half/butter mixture, salt and pepper. Mash until smooth. Finally, add the egg yolk until combined.

5. Preheat the oven to 400 ° F.

6. Make the filling by adding canola oil in a sauté pan set on medium high heat. Add the onion and carrots until they start to change colour, about 3 to 4 minutes.

7. Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds. Add the beef, salt and pepper. Cook until the beef is browned and cooked through.

8. Sprinkle the flour over the meat and stir to make sure the flour coats the meat. Cook the mixture for another minute.

9. Add the tomato paste, chicken broth, Worcestershire, rosemary, thyme, and stir to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil. Then reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. The sauce/meat mixture should thicken up a bit.

10. Add the corn and peas to the beef mixture. Once the corn and peas are distributed in the mixture, pour into the cooking tin(s)/pan(s).

11. Top the meat mixture in the tin(s)/pan(s) with the prepared mashed potatoes. Get the mashed potatoes to the edge of the tin to make a seal. This prevents the mixture from bubbling up. Smooth out the potatoes.

12. To keep your oven clean, put the tin(s)/pan(s) on a parchment lined baking sheet. Put in the oven and bake for 25 minutes. The potatoes should begin to brown.

13. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack for at least 15 minutes.

## Recipe Notes:

I recommend buying the aluminum tins with lids and baking this directly in the container. When I made this for a family, I used 6 smaller tins that seemed to be the same size or slightly bigger than my 28 oz containers. Saved time and easy to portion for the family!

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This recipe is inspired from one I saw from Alton Brown on the Food Network. In the United States, where I am from, Food Network airs many more cooking shows. Instead of watching Saturday morning cartoons, I would watch cooking shows (and still try to). This is one I’ve made for my husband and me and thought it would be a nice meal for a family, especially in the winter.”*

# "Choose Your Own Adventure" Lentil Dal

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 4 People

**Total Cost:** \$20

**Region:** Indian

**Chef:** Meghan

## Ingredients:

- 1 mid-sized onion, diced
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1-2 inch fresh ginger (or 2 teaspoons ground)
- 2 tablespoons cumin seed
- 1 tablespoon coriander seed
- 3 tablespoons garam masala
- 1 tablespoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon hot chili powder (alter to your preference)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 teaspoons fennel seed (optional)
- 2 teaspoons fenugreek (optional)
- 1 teaspoons mace (optional)
- Water
- 796ml (28 fl oz) canned tomatoes
- Fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1 cup (250g) dried yellow split pea\*
- 1 cup (250g) dried red lentils\*



## This food is:

Dairy-free, Gluten-free, Vegan, Vegetarian, Halal, Kosher

## Credit inspiration:

Co-workers

## Preparation:

1. Rinse dried beans and remove any debris/stones. Put in a pot large enough to cover with water. Bring to boil, skim any scum and reduce to a medium heat. If the water gets absorbed before beans are tender, add more water. Check beans for tenderness and season with salt right before they're finished. Drain beans and set aside. \*If using canned beans, drain and rinse and set aside.
2. While beans are cooking/almost ready, prepare remaining ingredients.
3. Dice onions, mince garlic and ginger.
4. Heat some oil in a pot or deep pan. Add the onions, garlic and ginger. Keep the heat low enough that the vegetables will soften more than brown.
5. Add a list of spices from the first section. Keep heat low to allow the spices to release their aromatics and stir occasionally.
6. Once beans are cooked (or if using canned), add the beans and stir to coat with the paste you're forming in the pot.
7. Add the canned tomatoes (crush with hand if you have whole ones).
8. Rinse out the can with some water and add to the pot.
9. Allow the liquid to thicken up a bit and the beans to absorb some of this flavourful liquid.
10. Season with salt and pepper. Check and adjust the other seasonings to your taste.
11. Wash and rough chop the fresh herbs and fold into the finished Dal. Use as much as you like.
12. Enjoy by itself or alongside something like rice.

### Recipe Notes:

\*Note: if you want to cut time, use canned. Feel free to interchange for other beans like chickpeas.

### Personal Anecdote:

*“This is something we usually make at work for a staff meal. It's hearty and healthy and gives us energy to keep us going!”*



# Simple Vegetable Lasagna

**Ready in:** 75 Minutes

**Serves:** 6-8 People

**Total Cost:** \$18

**Chef:** Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa

## Ingredients:

- 796 mL (28 fl oz) can of tomato sauce
- 375 g box of lasagna noodles
- 2 cups of extra smooth ricotta cheese
- 700 g (about 3 ½ cups) of marble cheese
- 2 - 3 tablespoons of pesto (optional)



## This food is:

Vegetarian, Halal

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven at 375° F and shred the cheese into a large bowl.
2. If you are adding pesto, mix 2-3 tablespoons of the pesto sauce into the tomato sauce.
3. Spread one-fourth of the sauce in the bottom of a 11 x 7-inch baking dish or spread enough to lightly cover the bottom of the dish.
4. Spread ricotta cheese onto lasagna noodles and place the noodles in the dish, covering the bottom.
5. Spread tomato sauce atop lasagna, then sprinkle marble cheese on top.
6. Layer noodles, ricotta, sauce and marble cheese until the pan is full, but not overflowing (there should be 3-4 layers). Leave slightly more cheese for the top layer. Try to distribute the sauce and ricotta cheese evenly across each layer.
7. Tightly cover the baking dish with 1 layer of aluminum foil. Cheese should not be touching foil.
8. Bake at 375° F for 45 minutes; uncover and bake 10 more minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving or packaging.

# Chicken Parmigiano

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 4 People

**Total Cost:** \$15

**Region:** Italian/American

**Chef:** David Cho

## Ingredients

- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- salt and pepper
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- ½ cup grated parmesan, and ¼ cup more for pasta
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup olive oil (frying)
- ½ cup pre-packaged tomato sauce
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ cup mozzarella (fresh, cut into small cubes)
- ½ cup grated provolone

## This food is:

Meat

## Credit inspiration:

Chef John, Chicken Parmesan, allrecipes.com

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This is a dish that I ate first at a restaurant in Etobicoke. We found that it was one of the few restaurant dishes I enjoyed that we could make at home, so we fell in love with it even though it was not originally from our East Asian cultural background.”*

## Preparation:

1. Preheat an oven to 450 ° F.
2. Place chicken breasts in a plastic baggie on a solid surface, and pound the chicken with the smooth side of a meat mallet until it is ½-inches thick. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Beat eggs and set aside.
4. Mix bread crumbs and ½ cup Parmesan cheese in a separate bowl, set aside.
5. Mix panko and ½ cup Parmesan cheese, and set aside.
6. Sift the flour and sprinkle both sides of the chicken evenly.
7. Dip flour coated chicken breasts in beaten eggs, then press the crumbs into both sides. Set aside for about 15 minutes.
8. Heat 1 cup olive oil in a large skillet on medium-high heat until it begins to shimmer. Cook chicken until golden on each side (about 2 minutes).
9. Place chicken in a baking dish and top each breast with about ⅓ cup of tomato sauce. Layer each chicken breast with equal amounts of mozzarella and provolone cheeses. Sprinkle 1 to 2 tablespoons of Parmesan on top and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil.
10. Bake until cheese is bubbly and chicken breasts are no longer pink in the center, 15 to 20 minutes. Internal temperature should be at least 165 ° F.

# Easy Kabsa Rice

**Ready in:** 60 Minutes

**Serves:** 3-4 People

**Total Cost:** \$30

**Region:** Saudi Arabia

**Chef:** Yamam Abuzinadah

## Ingredients:

- 1 lb chicken breast or thighs
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 2 tablespoons butter, ghee or any oil
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 large red onion
- 1 cup crushed tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ cup sultanas or raisin
- 1 tsp salt and pepper or as desired
- ½ teaspoon each of cumin and dried coriander
- 2 cardamom cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 dried black lemon (or 2 lemons zest)
- 1 cup of shaved almonds for garnish

Dried black lemon can be found in various specialty shops. Try St. Lawrence Market!

## This food is:

Halal, Kosher, Meat

## Credit inspiration:

Salaha Alghamdi (mama)

## Preparation:

1. Cut the chicken into small cubes.
2. In a large pot on medium heat, add the oil, onions, spices and simmer until it softens.
3. Add all the rest of the ingredients together and simmer for a minute, then add 3 cups of boiling water, and turn the heat to low. Make sure the water level is 2 cm (¾ inch) above the food (that's the trick!)

## Personal Anecdote:

*“My mother who lives in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia taught me how to cook this delicious traditional dish and every time I cook this the smell takes me back home. This is a simplified recipe, it comes in many variations like shrimp or lamb with a longer process. We use different spices and vegetables. Tuna makes a great substitute. The dried black lemon is what gives it that distinctive flavour. It is served traditionally in a large metal tray, with yogurt sauce and a simple salad. Our ancestors used to eat it by hand - try it is a liberating feeling! Many people in the Middle East, especially the Arabian gulf, consider kabsa the traditional dish of the area.”*

# DESSERT

# Easy Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ready in: 30 Minutes

Serves: 24 Cookies

Total Cost: \$10

**Chef:** Michelle Kay

## Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup of butter
- 3/4 cup of white sugar
- 3/4 cup of brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 2 cups of chocolate chips



## This food is:

Halal, Kosher, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Jeanne5, Chocolate Chip Cookies V, [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 ° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or tin foil.
2. Sift the flour, baking soda and salt together in one bowl.
3. In another bowl, cream together the softened (room temperature) butter with the sugars until fluffy. Add in the eggs and beat together until well blended. Add in the vanilla and chocolate chips.
4. Form the cookie dough into balls and place on the baking sheet.
5. Put the dough into the oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes until golden around the edges but still soft in the middle.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“These cookies aren't specific to where I'm from but they're still special because they're really easy to make and one of the first things I learned to bake. It also doesn't cost much and take too much time to make, which is perfect when you want a treat or a quick gift for someone else. Who doesn't like homemade cookies? Plus, the smell of freshly-baked cookies is wonderful and fills your home with warmth.”*

# Rice Crispie Thang

**Ready in:** 30 Minutes

**Serves:** 14 People

**Total Cost:** \$7.50

**Chef:** Siue Moffat

## Ingredients

- 5 - 6 cups crisped rice cereal
- 1 cup peanut butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup corn syrup or maple syrup or rice syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chocolate chips (optional)



## This food is:

Dairy-Free, Vegan, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

This recipe came from my cookbook:  
*Lickin' the Beaters: Low Fat Vegan  
Desserts Illustrated by 8 Fantastic Artists*

## Preparation:

1. Heat sugar and syrup in a large pot over medium heat until bubbly.
2. Remove from heat and add peanut butter and cereal. Mix and spread into a greased 9" x 13" pan or similar pan.
3. Melt chocolate chips, if using, in a double boiler (or one pot in a bigger pot that has some water), or microwave, then drizzle onto the squares.
4. Refrigerate until cool and cut.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“Up until about 10 years ago it was impossible to get vegan marshmallows so this recipe became the "go-to" for "Rice Crispie Treats". Over the past few years I see it's making a comeback, maybe due to the fact that peanut butter is cheaper than vegan marshmallows!”*

# Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars

**Ready in:** 105 Minutes

**Serves:** 24 People

**Total Cost:** \$15

**Chef:** Sandy Halliday

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 ½ cups firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- One 12-ounce bag (a scant 2 cups) semisweet chocolate chips

*I made this in an aluminum cake tin found in the baking aisle of my Loblaws. It's easy to make directly in the pan, and it comes with a lid so they are super easy to transport!.*



## This food is:

Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars, [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com)

## Preparation:

1. Make sure the oven rack is in the middle. Once positioned, preheat the oven to 350 ° F.
2. Melt the butter in a microwave safe bowl or in a small saucepan. Brush some of the butter in a 9-by-13-inch pan. Let the remaining butter cool slightly.
3. Once the butter is slightly cooled, whisk in the brown sugar, eggs and vanilla until smooth. You will need to do this in a large bowl.
4. In another bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Mix together, but be sure to not overmix. It will be a thick batter. Fold in the chocolate chips.
6. Spread the batter in the prepared pan. If using an aluminum pan, put the pan on a baking sheet before

putting it in the oven.

7. Bake for about 30 minutes. The edges should be browned and the centre should be fully set.
8. Let the cookies cool completely (at least one hour). Cut into 24 pieces, or leave it as one big cookie and let the family cut it to the size they want.

# Brown Sugar Buttons

Ready in: 40 Minutes

Serves: 50 People

Total Cost: \$10

**Chef:** Laura Rojas

## Ingredients

- 1 cup softened butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (you can also add nutmeg, cinnamon, grated ginger, or orange zest. Experiment with it!)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup corn starch
- Icing sugar to decorate (optional)



## This food is:

Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

The original recipe is from a 2008 magazine clipping (Smuckers recipe).

## Preparation:

1. Preheat your oven to 350 ° F.
2. Whisk butter, brown sugar, and vanilla until fluffy, then slowly add the flour and cornstarch (+ any other flavour additions). Mix together to form a dough consistency.
3. Using a spoon, scoop little balls and roll them to be approximately 2 cm (¾ inches) each. Place them on baking sheets lined with parchment paper and flatten them a little.
4. With a toothpick, poke small holes in the cookies to make the button holes.
5. Cook on one side until the top of the Bake the cookies for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven and let cool.

## Personal Anecdote:

*“My mom shared this recipe with me. Since it's a simple recipe, she often experiments with adding different spices and flavour combinations and they always turn out so delicious. I have very fond memories of the warm, brown sugar smell filling the house while she bakes these.”*



# Tortoni Cream Pie

**Ready in:** 30 Minutes

**Serves:** 6 People

**Total Cost:** \$6

**Chef:** Ryan & Heather

## Ingredients:

- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup (8 oz) heavy cream/whipping cream
- ¼ cup sugar (for use with whipped cream)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoon amaretto or rum (or ½ teaspoon almond extract for an alcohol-free)
- ¼ cup chopped almonds
- ¼ cup flaked coconut
- Pie shell

## Preparation:

1. Bake the pie shell before adding any other ingredients, then set aside to cool.
2. Beat egg white until frothy, then add 2 tablespoons of sugar gradually and continue beating until stiff peaks form.
3. In a separate bowl, whip the cream, ¼ cup sugar, vanilla, and Amaretto/rum/almond extract.
4. Mix together chopped almonds and coconut and bake at 300 ° F until just golden. Be careful not to over toast.
5. In a small bowl, mix together the almonds and coconut and add ¾ of the mixture into the whipped cream, reserving the remaining ¼ cup.
6. Fold the beaten egg whites into the whipped cream mixture and then spoon into the cooled pie shell. Sprinkle the reserved almonds and coconut on top.
7. Freeze until firm.
8. Cut into 6 slices and serve!

## This food is:

Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Nana Harper

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This prized family recipe has a longstanding place in our family’s holiday dinners. The grandchildren would always fight over the last slice. It comes from Heather’s nana, and since her passing the grandchildren have taken over making it for dinners.”*

# Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

**Ready in:** 25 Minutes

**Serves:** 12 People

**Total Cost:** \$25

**Chef:** Jan

## Ingredients

- ¾ cup oat flour or oats pulsed to a fine powder
- ¾ cup rolled oats (can be quick oats, steel cut, large flake, etc)
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup (or 3 tablespoons honey)
- 2 tablespoon melted coconut oil (or 2 tablespoons of a neutral oil, melted butter/vegan butter, or avocado oil)
- ¼ cup brown sugar (substitute equal parts coconut or cane sugar)
- 2 tablespoon nut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup dark chocolate chunks or chips
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon cooking oil (optional if toasting walnuts)

## Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 ° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. (Optional step) Place walnuts on a sheet and toast with 1 teaspoon cooking oil. Arrange in a single layer on the pan and place in a preheated oven for 3-5 minutes until walnuts are brown and fragrant (keep watching the oven to make sure the walnuts do not burn!) Take out of the oven and place walnuts in a bowl. We will be re-using the parchment paper.
3. In one large bowl, mix all oat flour, oats, baking soda, and salt.
4. In another large bowl, mix maple syrup, vanilla extract, nut butter, coconut oil, brown sugar.
5. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir well to combine.
6. Add chocolate chunks/chips and walnuts. Stir well to combine.
7. Divide mixture into 12 equal parts. Roll each part

## Personal Anecdote:

*“This was the first cookie recipe I tried and I remember being very nervous making it because baking was not something I was good at. However, these cookies are super easy to make and turned out amazing! Feel free to customize with different ingredients, like raisins, dried cranberries, unsweetened coconut flakes, or other nuts.”*

into a ball. Place each ball 3 inches apart on the baking sheet. Press each ball lightly to flatten.

8. Bake for 9 minutes. Remove and let cool on the baking sheet until set and cooled.

## This food is:

Dairy-free, Vegan, Gluten-Free, Vegetarian

## Credit inspiration:

Laurel, Gluten Free Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies, [darngoodveggies.com](http://darngoodveggies.com)

# A WORD FROM

# JUSTICE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

By Jade Guthrie



Photo credit: Justice for Migrant Workers

When we talk about food justice, we often default to conversations about food access – about the barriers that we, the people we love, and our communities face that prevent us from being able to buy, cook, and eat the food we need to thrive. These are, undoubtedly, necessary conversations – critically questioning why it’s more difficult to find a beautiful, fresh, crisp, juicy apple in a neighbourhood like Malvern (where I grew up) than somewhere like the Bluffs.

What is often left out of these conversations, though, is where that food comes from, how it does (or, does not) get to us and our communities. In these conversations, we erase from the picture the hands that sow, tend to, and harvest those Granny Smiths – the ones that work and care for the land, invisibilizing the hands that feed us all.

In keeping with this ‘apple’ thread holding this piece together, I’m sharing a recipe here for a caramel-apple jam I love to make every year during harvest season. While you engage in the hard work of peeling, slicing, cooking, and preserving these apples, take some time to consider this invisibilized labour. Think about those hands. What do they look like? What conditions were they harvesting in? What are their names?



Photo credit: Anelyse Weiler

# Autumn Caramel-Apple Jam

## (adapted from 'The Preservation Kitchen')

### Ingredients

12 cups apples, peeled, cored, and cubed  
2 cups apple cider  
1 ¼ cups sugar  
2 tablespoons dried thyme  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 teaspoon nutmeg  
½ teaspoon black pepper

### Directions

1. Melt sugar with a splash of water over medium-high heat in a pot. Cook, swirling the pot, until sugar browns – you're looking for a deep golden brown colour (about 10 minutes).
2. Add spices (thyme, cinnamon, nutmeg, and pepper) – be careful as mixture may splatter.
3. Remove pot from heat, add cider (again, use care here as mixture will splatter and seize). Return to medium heat, simmer until caramel and cider combine. Cook for 3-5 minutes, reducing cider liquid by half.
5. Add apples and stir. Cover with lid and cook for 5 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once the mixture has thickened to a jam-like consistency, turn off heat.
5. Enjoy jam on toast, with cheese and crackers, or any other pairing that tickles your fancy.

**Every year**, over 20,000 migrant workers arrive here in Ontario to work on farms, in greenhouses, and at food factories, constituting the backbone of our province’s lucrative agricultural industry. Workers enter the country on temporary work visas under a nation-wide program called the “Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program” (SAWP). This program is often lauded as a landmark example of progressive immigration policy, furthering Canada’s myth-making project of the “welcoming, multicultural mosaic”

What this narrative really does is erase the underlying racist and colonial structures that form the foundation of the SAWP, and more broadly, the bedrock of the Canadian state. Workers are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. They hail from so-called “underdeveloped” countries across the Caribbean, Mexico, Latin America, and Asia – places like Guatemala, or Jamaica, where my family is from.

The SAWP codes these Black and Brown bodies as good enough to exploit for labour, but not ‘deserving’ of permanent status. It replicates imperial and colonial processes of exploitation and extraction in the so-called “Global South.” It reproduces plantation dynamics with workers tied to a single employer (who is, most often, a white settler), housed in segregated conditions on-farm, and exploited for their labour – often paid less than minimum wage.

Photo credit: Justice for Migrant Workers



Our food system was built to facilitate the settler-colonial state profiting off the backs of Black and Indigenous people.

And let's not forget about how capitalism is tied up in all of this. The SAWP is employer-centric, favouring the financial interests of these big corporate farms over the rights of workers – consistently prioritizing profit over human rights. The program brings in billions of dollars Canada's agricultural industry, with the state funneling money into employers' pockets in the form of subsidies and tax credits.

The corporate capture of our food system is ongoing – it is not difficult to connect the dots between state politicians, grocery giants like the Weston family, 'Big-Ag' corporate farms, and exploited, underpaid, and abused workers.

Making these connections, it's no surprise then, that the workers who put food on the table for families across the country every day often struggle to access the food they need to survive. The same corporate bigwigs who lobby against liveable wages are key players in the SAWP, meaning that workers (without whom our food chain would collapse in on itself) are rarely getting paid enough to cover the basic costs of living, including meals.

We have all felt the weight of COVID-19 on our communities, have all witnessed and experienced how the pandemic has compounded the impacts of poverty and food insecurity – particularly for racialized and marginalized communities. It has been no different for migrant farm workers.

Migrant workers across Ontario are ten times more likely to contract COVID-19 than the general population; in Canada, over the past two years, thousands of workers have contracted the virus, and at least four have died as a result – which is more than likely an underreported number. Isolated on farms during the pandemic, workers have been forced into relying on employers to provide meals for them – many of which have been child-sized portions of food that lack both nutritional value and cultural relevance for most.

What the pandemic has also prompted, though, is a renewed breath of life into mutual aid organizing among our communities. We have seen workers and allies coming together to support and take care of one another. Meal sharing. Food box drop offs. Hot meal care packages.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the oppression and marginalization that migrant farm workers face, these communities have continued to resist, rally, and organize through the worst of it. They have had the courage to work together to

build an expansive future that imagines a food system *for the people*.

As of 2021, Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program has existed for 55 years. That means 55 years of systemic racism, exploitation, and colonial violence. More importantly, 55 years of political organizing, collective action, and fighting back.

So, when you hold and peel and slice those apples that have passed through so many hands to get to yours, I encourage you to consider this struggle. How calloused were those hands that picked them off the tree, hardened by twelve-hour days and bunkhouse living? How many beads of sweat moistened the soil that nourished those roots? Does the sweetness of that apple taste like resistance to you? And, how can we plant and steward the seeds for a truly radical and just food system?

I'll leave you with some words from one of the workers who feeds us, from the folk who plant and nurture and harvest these apples we eat. When asked what they want people to think about the next time they bite into one of those local Ontario-grown fruits, here's what they had to say:

"From budding, to planting, and then to nurturing this fruit, the apples, I work hard to get it from the trees, to the factories, then to your table – in all of the worst weather conditions that nature has to offer, yet we get it done. With a tired body, but in the end, it brings me a smile knowing that it reaches your home and adds the best nutrition for you and your family. While you enjoy this fresh fruit, please think of us, who labour in the fields."



# FOOD NOT BOMBS



## A NOTE FROM NICOLE DAVIS

Interview by Siue Moffat

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**Food Not Bombs (FNB) started in 1980 as a bake sale to fundraise for anti-Nuke activists in New Hampshire. Since then, it has had a very colourful and radical history with many arrests, FBI raids, fights against city ordinances that prohibit serving free food in public spaces, and of course, tens of thousands of people fed. In Toronto, there have been many incarnations of FNB since at least 1997, serving at various locations including Allan Gardens, City Hall, Moss Park, and Spadina and Bloor. There are over 1000 FNB chapters around the world.**

My name is Nicole Davis and I'm one of the co-founders of this current iteration of the Toronto chapter. I have been a member of Toronto's Food Not Bombs since 2014, and a co-organizer since 2016! From 2013-2017, a varying group of 2-10 people would cook together out of whatever kitchen we could find, usually volunteer's houses. We were offered a kitchen space out of the mutual aid organization Seeds of Hope in 2018 and were cooking out of there until the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, we had been doing a regular weekly food serving at Allan Gardens since 2017, and various other parks and street corners around the city before that. This iteration of Toronto's Food Not Bombs began with Squid Lutz partnering with the Allan Gardens Food and Clothing Share— a collective of Indigenous women who had been serving the unhoused community around there for a few years already. Once I started cooking with Squid again, and we then had a few more volunteers join us, the servings became larger and larger. We would cook huge amounts of nutritious, vegan food, and often fed 150+ people in a day. Traditionally, a group of volunteers would collect food that was going to be wasted either through partnerships with grocery stores, other community organizations, or dumpster diving, and purchase other staple items with money from donations. We would then cook a large vegan meal with various dishes based on the ingredients we had available to us that week. We would usually collect food donations on Fridays, cook on Saturdays, and then serve on Sundays in Allan Gardens.

When the pandemic started we could no longer cook in a kitchen together, so a group of core volunteers (Aidan McKendrick, Lam Nguyen, Ryan Gallaway, and Squid Lutz) began collecting food donations, purchasing some produce with donation money, and making grocery bags to hand out instead of the meals we were making. Our volunteer pool had been around 3-10 members any given weekend, but a few months into this new setup, they put out a callout for new volunteers and got a huge response and our team has been growing ever since!

Most of the food we receive is redirected from landfill, but all of it is extremely high quality and we never give out expired food. We also now have teams of people who make sandwiches and muffins to provide in our grocery bags every week! We recently began bringing hot, home-cooked meals to people in some of the different encampments around the city, and are currently working to refine and expand that project.

I've been organizing with Food Not Bombs for 8 years and it has been so incredible to see it grow and expand during this time. We have gotten a lot of media and financial support recently and lots of people heralding the work we do. While this recognition is greatly appreciated, we believe it is important to always refocus on the fact that this type of work should not have to exist, and that this is all symptomatic of a huge failure in our government to feed and care for its citizens. We are giving out more food than ever before in the history of this chapter, and while it is meaningful to be able to do so, it is also symptomatic of these difficult times when more people than ever cannot afford or access food in this city. Our hope is for a world in which the work we do is no longer necessary, and that it could be simply a way to come together and celebrate community.

[foodnotbombs.net](http://foodnotbombs.net)  
[torontofoodnotbombs.ca](http://torontofoodnotbombs.ca)



Photos courtesy of Food Not Bombs Toronto Chapter

**The People's Pantry** is grateful to have met and collaborated with various allied groups and organizations on our mutual aid journey.

The following is a shout-out to the partnerships we have built and the folks who have played an important role in the work we've been able to do. From supporting the delivery of meals to donating items for our raffles or providing funding opportunities to keep our work going, thank you for being part of this initiative!



## **FoodShareTO**

FoodShareTO is a group aiming to address issues of food injustice and food insecurity by supporting local food initiatives and community education programs about growing and eating healthy food. In 1999 they began as a community garden and since then they have grown to provide healthy and local food to over 260,000 individuals per year. FoodShareTO has helped The People's Pantry by providing fresh food boxes and delivery assistance to our community members, as well as acting as signing Trustees for many of our grants and funding opportunities. With this help we've been able to sustainably plan our ongoing volunteer endeavors and shared goals of community education and addressing food justice in our province. You can learn more about FoodShareTO's local history or make a donation at [foodshare.net](https://www.foodshare.net).

## **The Bike Brigade**

The Bike Brigade was developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver food, medicine, and other essential supplies by bicycle. The Bike Brigade has collaborated with The People's Pantry from the beginning to deliver home cooked meals to individuals around Toronto with volunteers completing multiple deliveries a day. Thank you so much to these volunteer cyclists! To join the brigade go to [bikebrigade.ca/volunteer](https://bikebrigade.ca/volunteer).

## **Hollandaise Diner**

Hollandaise Diner has supplied grocery donations and worked with The People's Pantry since March of 2020. Marisa Tran and Josh de Grosbois opened Hollandaise Diner in December of 2015 serving breakfast and brunch staples. With a focus on inclusivity and food equity, the diner was a safe space for people in the Danforth East neighbourhood. From identity to accessibility, Hollandaise fostered a safe and inclusive environment to accommodate everyone's needs. Unfortunately, Hollandaise Diner closed in October 2020 as a result of the hardships of COVID-19. A huge thank you to Hollandaise Diner for all they have done for The People's Pantry and for the community.

## **East York Tenants Union**

East York Tenants Union is organized through Peoples Defence to support immigrant and working class households in East York who are at risk of eviction. With the foundation of housing being a human right, East York Tenants Union also provides food and legal

support to their community. Currently they provide groceries and services to over 100 families by coming together to sort, package, and deliver food in their neighbourhood. To donate and show support visit [chuffed.org/project/no-covid-evictions-protect-the-eastyork50](https://chuffed.org/project/no-covid-evictions-protect-the-eastyork50).

### **La Bakeri**

La Bakeri is an Italian-style bakery in Hamilton that has been around since 1980. Marisa Tran has been donating loaves of bread and pastries for almost an entire year! Thank you so much to Marisa and the team at La Bakeri for helping add such a simple but important component to our food sharing initiative! You can visit La Bakeri at 935 Fennell Avenue East or you can order online at [order.labakeri.com](https://order.labakeri.com).

### **Book Bank Canada**

Since 2008, The Children's Book Bank has been collecting book donations for youth in schools and afterschool programs. They run Storytimes, Newcomers Programs, and Book Drives for various age groups. The Children's Book Bank helped us out by donating books and toys to include with our Holiday Bundles in December 2020. We added the books and toys to grocery bundles along with baked goods to give out to families in the GTA around the holidays and New Year. You can get involved with the Children's Book Bank by donating books, becoming a sponsor, or becoming a volunteer at [childrensbookbank.com/get-involved](https://childrensbookbank.com/get-involved).

### **Unit 2 Community Space**

Unit 2 is a community art space for and by Queer, Trans, 2 Spirit, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Their space is used for multiple creative endeavors and acts as a space where ideas and people come together. You can apply to become a volunteer or book the space for your own projects such as rehearsals, workshops, or photoshoots at [unit2.club/get-involved](https://unit2.club/get-involved).

### **Maggie's Toronto**

Maggie's Toronto Sex Worker's Action Project is one of Canada's oldest by and for sex worker support organizations and one of the first sex worker organizations globally to receive government funding. Our guiding principles steer the growth and development of all programming, services, education and outreach at Maggie's. We are not an exit organization. We are founded on the belief



that to improve our lives, sex workers must take back the power to control our own destinies. That is why Maggie's exists first and foremost as an organization for sex workers, that is controlled by sex workers because we know that nothing about us, without us, is for us.

### **Motherdough Toronto**

Motherdough Mill & Bakery was established in 2005 by Carole Ferrari. By using local ingredients and selling at Farmers Markets, Motherdough helps support our local agriculture workers and community. They helped us out by donating loaves of bread and baked goods for us to include in our grocery bundles program. You can order online at [motherdoughto.com/order-here](https://motherdoughto.com/order-here).

### **The Sweet Potato**

The Sweet Potato is a health food grocery store run by Digs Dorfman in the Junction neighborhood of Toronto. The Sweet Potato is a Toronto staple because of its long-standing history with local farmers who would meet at weekend markets. We reached out to local businesses to help round up prizes for our holiday raffle and The Sweet Potato generously donated gift cards so we were able to share the great things they carry with our community members within our network. You can check out their blog and healthy recipes as well as shop their store for pickup or delivery at [shop.thesweetpotato.ca](https://shop.thesweetpotato.ca).

### **Sweets From The Earth**

Sweets From The Earth is a family-owned business that was born in 2002. From a limited selection of vegan treats and bakeries in the city, Sweets From The Earth began by selling its small batch goods to restaurants and coffee shops in Toronto's Junction neighborhood. Over the course of the last 15 years, SFTE has grown coast to coast in Canada and into the US with a focus on Kosher, Vegan, and Gluten-Free goodies. Sweets From The Earth kindly donated a digital gift card for our Holiday Raffle. You can support them by shopping their online catalogue at [shop.sweetsfromtheearth.com](https://shop.sweetsfromtheearth.com).

### **Essence of Life Organics**

Essence of Life Organics is a health food store located in Toronto's Kensington Market. They carry everything from vitamins to beauty products, groceries, and zero waste products. Essence of Life



Organics generously donated items for our Holiday Raffle bundle in January. You can support them by shopping their online store for pickup or local delivery at [essenceoflifeorganics.com](https://essenceoflifeorganics.com).

### **TOWN the Store**

TOWN is a gift shop that also has cards, stationary and home accessories. It is located on Dundas West and showcases local talent featuring works by Toronto designers and artists. TOWN the Store generously donated items in our home bundle in January that went toward our Holiday Raffle. You can support TOWN by visiting their online store at [townthestore.com/collections/all](https://townthestore.com/collections/all).

### **Community Food Centres Canada**

Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC) is an organization that works to bring healthy food in an accessible and educational manner to areas all over the country. They have a broad range of support tactics through funding and organizing capacities which allow them to welcome ideas from organizers and neighborhood leaders in order to highlight issues of food insecurity, nutrition, and local farming sustainability. This year, with the assistance of FoodShareTO, we were granted \$50,000 from CFCC which allowed us to allocate money to chefs to reimburse them for the groceries they bought to make food, put money toward grocery gift cards for families who were not able to get cooked meals, and we offered honoraria to our volunteers as a way of thanking them for their time and continued support. You can donate to ongoing campaigns that aim to distribute healthy food to more people across Canada by visiting [netdonor.net/page/80252/donate/1?ea.tracking.id=cfccca&\\_ga=2.156308413.769677605.1619217899-861442217.1619217899](https://netdonor.net/page/80252/donate/1?ea.tracking.id=cfccca&_ga=2.156308413.769677605.1619217899-861442217.1619217899).

### **JustGiving**

JustGiving is described as a tech-for-good company that pairs innovative and dedicated community leaders with the funding and tools necessary to help make their campaigns a success. The fees they charge to assist in research and development of these campaigns is fed back into their network that continues to pay it forward and help the partnerships grow. We are incredibly grateful to JustGiving for helping fund and sponsor the local leaders mentorship program in Toronto and through our network of volunteers. To learn more about how to start your own fundraising or crowdfunding campaign go to [justgiving.com/fundraising](https://justgiving.com/fundraising).



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Cover Art by Moe Pramanick

Moe Pramanick is a South Asian artist and illustrator based in Tkaronto, or so-called Toronto, Ontario: traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Wendat, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. She explores grief, transformation, kinship and other themes that emerge via explorations into relationships with herself, the land, and her loved ones. Moe is interested in using illustration, public art and workshop to allow space for herself and others to nurture visions of a new world. Moe has created works for clients including the International Committee of the Red Cross, StreetARToronto and City of Waterloo. By day, she works as the Community Mobilization Coordinator at FoodShare, supporting the organization's food justice advocacy work in Toronto. Her portfolio is at [moepramanick.com](http://moepramanick.com)

*"This design is inspired by the kitchen as a place for revolution; food as central to creating space and building our communities. Drawn from elements of my childhood kitchen and those of my aunts, neighbours and friends."*