

Simple and Delicious

FLOURLESS BAKING



Many people have gone flourless for specific health reasons. Some do so because they think the gluten in flour aggravates other medical conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis or asthma. Others believe avoiding flour makes them feel better.

Celiac disease is one of the main reasons for going flourless. It is one of the most common autoimmune diseases. In fact, in the last 50 years, one in 133 people have been diagnosed with the disease. Another reason for eliminating flour in your baking is to reduce carbohydrates. Flour is high in carbs.

Removing flour from your diet can improve your health. Going with an all-natural diet like the Paleo Diet, can help free the body from chronic diseases such as:

- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease (heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, atherosclerosis)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cancer of many types
- Autoimmune diseases (multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, etc.)
- Osteoporosis
- Acne
- Myopia (nearsightedness), macular degeneration, glaucoma
- Varicose veins
- Hemorrhoids
- Diverticulosis, gastric reflux
- Gout

There are many reasons to go flourless. It could be an allergy to wheat or gluten. You may want a more natural diet that reduces many diseases and health problems. Maybe you just want to reduce the amount of carbs you take in every day. Going flourless may be very beneficial and just what the doctor ordered.

Tips for Flourless Baking

Flourless baking can be a real trial-and-error process. Flour, when used in baking, adds body, structure, texture and flavor to baked goods. It often acts as a binder, attaching ingredients together. When you remove the flour, you have to add something else in its place that will perform the same function.

Here are some tips to help achieve better baking results when going flourless.

1. To increase the nutrition value, substitute up to 1/4 cup ground flaxseeds plus 1/4 cup water for 1/4 cup flour in a recipe (flax will absorb more moisture).
2. To add more moisture to your recipe, add gelatin, extra egg or oil. Honey or rice malt syrup helps retain moisture.
3. Substitute brown sugar for white for more moisture.

4. To enhance the flavor of flourless foods, add chocolate chips, dried fruits or nuts and double the amount of spices called for.
5. For better structure, add dry milk solids or cottage cheese to the recipe. Replace evaporated milk for regular milk.
6. Add extra egg or egg whites if your recipe is too crumbly.
7. Don't overbeat since the kneading time is shorter with no gluten to develop.
8. You can use ground oats in place of flour, but you need ingredients like banana or eggs to bind the ingredients together.
9. Eggs can replace many functions of gluten such as binding enhancing texture setting the structure of the recipe. Two other starch-based products you can use to bind and thicken are guar gum and xanthan gum. They are interchangeable and used in small amounts.

The key to flourless baking is to experiment. You may have to try different ingredients or amounts to get the flavor and texture you want.

Filling the Pantry

Filling your pantry with flourless alternatives is a bit different from a normally stocked baking pantry. Although there are many alternatives to wheat flour, for our purposes, we're sticking with non-flour ingredients.

- Black or White Beans, Garbanzo beans (drained, rinsed and pureed) when substituting for flour. Use 1 cup of bean puree (about a 15 oz can) instead of 1 cup of flour, when baking.
- Rolled Oats offer a nutty taste and course texture. Oats can be used instead of flour in muffin recipes. Use 1 cup of oats for every 1 cup of all-purpose flour. You may also need to add 1 or 2 teaspoons of baking powder or soda, per cup of oats. Ensure moisture from ingredients like eggs or mashed banana.
- Nuts can be ground and added to baked goods in place of flour.
- Flaxseed is the seeds of the flax plant. They have nutty taste. The whole seeds need to be ground into meal for baking. A simple spice or coffee grinder can do this in seconds.
- Chocolate, Chocolate chips, Cocoa Powder
- Eggs
- Guar gum and xanthan gum are used in gluten-free cooking to bind, thicken and emulsify gluten-free ingredients.

- Corn Meal can be used in pancakes, muffins, cornbread and tortillas.
- Fruit purees such as applesauce and pumpkin
- Seasonings
- Almond meal is ground almonds, good for flour substitute in muffins.
- Peanut butter
- Baking soda
- Baking powder
- Sugar, brown sugar, sugar substitute – if you're watching your carbs, replace the sugar in these recipes with substitute.
- Molasses, honey
- Unflavored gelatin can be used as a binder, thickener and egg substitute when mixed with water.
- Millet is a seed with a rice-like texture when cooked. It can be used for cereal, a base in stews or for millet cakes.
- Pumpkin seed meal is a flour alternative that adds a nutty flavor.
- Sesame seed meal comes from ground sesame seeds.
- Sunflower seed meal is a flour alternative made from ground sunflower seeds.
- Chia seed meal is made from ground chia seeds. Adjust liquid levels and cooking times when used in baking.

Whatever your reason for going flourless, experimenting and filling your pantry with alternate and substitute ingredients will give you a well-stocked arsenal to begin using flourless recipes.

Flourless Recipes

Here are a few recipes to help you get started baking without wheat flour. Try one or try them all. From Black Bean Brownies to Peanut Butter Oatmeal Cookies, there's a little something for everyone.

Let's go...

Black Bean Brownies – No Eggs



Makes 12 brownies

Ingredients:

1 x 15 ounce can of black beans (or 1/2 cup dry, soaked and fully cooked)
1 cup sugar

1/2 cup oats
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1/4 cup vegetable oil (or your favorite baking oil)
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking powder
Dash of salt
1 cup chocolate chips

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Grease an 8 x 8 square baking pan and set aside.

Drain and rinse the black beans.

Place all ingredients except the chocolate chips in a food processor until completely smooth. Mix in 3/4 cup chocolate chips by hand.

Add batter to the pan and spread it evenly in the pan. Sprinkle the remaining 1/4 cup chocolate over the top if desired.

Bake the brownies for about 20 minutes. They will still be soft and won't have the texture of regular baked brownies, so don't let them burn on the edges. Let sit for about 30 minutes before serving, so the brownies can firm up as they cool.

Vegan Chocolate Cupcakes



Make 12 cupcakes

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups oats

½ cup sugar
½ cup cocoa powder
2 teaspoons baking powder
Pinch of salt
1 mashed banana
¼ cup vegetable oil
¾ cup almond or soy milk
½ tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla

Frosting:

2 cups icing sugar
½ cup vegetable shortening
1 teaspoon vanilla
Optional: food coloring
Up to 5 tablespoons water

Cupcake Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Line a cupcake pan with 12 cupcake liners. Set aside.

Place oats in a blender and grind until fine.

Add ground oats, sugar, cacao, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Whisk well. Add the mashed banana, vegetable oil, milk, apple cider vinegar and vanilla. Continue to whisk until smooth.

Divide batter among the 10 cupcake liners and bake for 20-25 minutes or until they start to firm on the top. Let cool completely before frosting.

Frosting Instructions:

Add icing sugar, shortening, vanilla and food coloring, if using, to mixing bowl. Use electric mixer to blend until smooth. Add enough water as you're mixing to create the consistency you want.

Oatmeal and Banana Muffins



Makes 10 muffins

Ingredients:

2 cups oats
2 ripe bananas
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup plain unsweetened yogurt
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
Dash of salt

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Grease a muffin tin and set aside.

Finely grind oats in a blender, so they make what looks like flour.

In a large mixing bowl, add the oat flour and remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth.

Fill the muffin cups about 2/3 full.

Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or when a toothpick is inserted and comes out clean. Cool before serving.

Peanut Butter Oat Cookies



Makes 36 cookies

Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cups peanut butter
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup softened butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla

1 tsp baking soda
2 ½ cups oats

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In large bowl, cream together butter, peanut butter and sugar. Add egg, vanilla and baking soda until creamy. Beat well. Stir in the oats until combined.

Drop by tablespoonful onto non-stick cooking sheets. Bake for 8-10 minutes or when they start brown slightly around the edges. Let cool before serving.

Pavlova with Fruit



Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

4 egg whites

1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Sliced strawberries for topping

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 250 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.

In a mixer, mix the 4 egg whites on low speed and increase slowly until soft peaks begin to form. Increase speed to medium high and start to slowly add the sugar and cornstarch. Mix for 2-3 minutes more. Then add the vanilla and lemon juice and continue to mix until stiff peaks form and the mixture appears shiny.

With a pastry bag or by spoon, divide the ingredients into 8 portions on the parchment paper covered baking sheet.

Bake for about 50-60 minutes or until they are dry to the touch. They should be white, rather than browned when they're done, so keep an eye on them as they bake. If they start to turn color, turn the temperature down about 25 degrees.

Let cool and top with sliced strawberries.

Apple Crumble



Makes 12 servings

Ingredients:

7 medium apples (pears taste delicious too)
1/2 cup melted butter
1 cup oats
1 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 F

Thinly slice the apples and place them along the bottom of 9 x 13 baking dish. There is no need peel the apples and you'll get the extra fiber.

Melt the butter in a medium microwavable bowl. Add the oats, brown sugar and cinnamon. Stir until well combined. Spread the mixture over the apple slices.

Bake for 45 minutes. Serve warm and preferably, with ice cream!

Easy Flourless Almond Biscuits



Makes 24 biscuits

Ingredients:

2 egg whites
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/8 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup ground almonds

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 276 degrees F.

Using an electric mixer, beat egg whites and cream of tartar until stiff peaks begin to form. Slowly add the sugar, vanilla and salt. Stop the mixer and fold in ground almonds.

Drop by tablespoonful to a non-stick baking sheet. Bake for about 20-30 minutes or when the edges begin to brown slightly. They will be soft when you take them out of the oven, but they'll harden as they cool.



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