

And God said,  
"Behold, I have given you every plant  
yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth,  
and every tree with seed in its fruit.  
You shall have them for food."  
—Genesis 1:29 ESV





T H E E A R T H Y C A N V A S

# Vegan COOKBOOK

100+ PLANT-BASED RECIPES THAT TASTE  
AS GOOD AS THEY LOOK

FAY KAZZI, PhD, MS, RD  
author of TheEarthyCanvas



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This book is dedicated to you.  
You who desire to better your  
understanding of creating  
wholesome meals and making it a  
beautiful experience every day.







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## INTRODUCTION

HELLO! I'm Fay. I'm part Lebanese and part Egyptian. I spent thirteen years (teenage and early adulthood) living in the Middle East, in the beautiful country of Lebanon, and grew up around an incredibly authentic variety of Eastern cuisines. Whether I was eating Kushari out of a copper plate in an old mom-and-pop shop in the middle of a loud market in Cairo, Egypt, dining the authentic meza spread in an ancient palace courtyard turned restaurant in Damascus, Syria, or eating a freshly baked mankoushe in the Broumana mountains of Lebanon where I lived, one thing is for sure, food in these places with the people I loved produced the most "present" moments I've ever experienced. So, as the inevitable would have it, food would follow me down the path of my education and career.

### **What God says about food**

*"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food" (Genesis 1:29, ESV).*

When I read this verse, it tells me that God originally intended for our diet to be "plant-based." As time went on and environmental catastrophes limited food options, He permitted humans to partake of animals and animal products, but originally speaking, it was all about plants.

### **How do I perceive food?**

Food, to me, is so much more than taste and smell; it's about reading the intent of the presentation and taking a moment to observe how it makes you feel. Food is also about *you*. It has the power to heal and bring life to your body. I believe healthy food has a divine responsibility to look and taste as good as it can be for you. What we put in our bodies directly affects our minds and, in turn, our spirituality. Also, evidence-based research today on the benefits of plant-based diets is now in the limelight like never before. My mission with this resource is to show how easy, meaningful, and beautiful, healthy food preparation can be!



## **My story**

Ever since I can remember, I've always had a special interest in food. One of my dad's favorite memories of me as a child was on my third birthday, when he asked me if I wanted to have cake, to which I enthusiastically responded: "No, I want a pickle!" And yes, he has it on video! What an odd request for a three-year-old to make on their birthday, you might think! But you see, I loved pickles. Being so high in salt and acid, my mom wouldn't let me have them as often as I would have liked. But on my birthday, I was allowed to have an entire thick, crunchy, cold, dill pickle, just for me. No splitting with my brother or having my mom cut it in half and toss back into the jar all sad and lonely. That doesn't mean I didn't have cake, but that pickle did something in my mouth that cake couldn't do. There was something about the strength of flavors, the unapologetic saltiness that balanced beautifully with a subtle sweetness which married into the acidity of the brine and enveloped its goodness in a firm, cool morsel, coating my entire mouth and tickling the back of my throat with lingering delight. That is my earliest understanding and appreciation of flavor. Today, I can tell you, though, I haven't grown out of my love for pickles, I will still only have them on special occasions; you'd be proud mom, and you're welcome to my kidneys!

As fate would have it, food was going to be the direction my education would take me as I pursued a bachelor of science in nutrition and dietetics, which led me to later complete a master's program in nutrition and dietetics as well. Shortly after receiving my master of science degree (MS), I sat for a grueling exam, which qualified me to become a registered dietitian. Within the same year of graduating with my MS, I was accepted into a PhD program in rehabilitation science, where I geared my research into probiotic therapy for gut rehabilitation. Up until midway through my PhD program, my relationship with food, though enthusiastic and passionate, was limited in its exploration, expression, and identity.

## **How food became art**

I've always been an artist at heart. Diving into the sciences with my education and career was an area in which I needed to invest a lot more intention. Amid the grueling demands of a PhD program, running a clinical trial, and juggling three jobs to pay my way through school, I was praying for some form of a creative outlet, as I was nearing a breaking point. Soon after, my prayer was answered, and I discovered an insatiable love for food photography and recipe creation that somehow seamlessly blended with my existing profession. It was a tremendous stress reliever and the perfect form of recreation I needed. Food styling soon followed, and before I knew it, I was absorbed in the artistic world of aesthetics and presentation, which I am convinced plays an important role in the overall commitment to healthier food and lifestyle-medicine practices. All of the pictures in this book were taken with my Canon Rebel in the humble setting of my little garage studio. The food photography you will see here is very personal, and I went to great lengths to ensure I directed each part and told you the story through my lens and styling techniques as I would want it to be read.

As I continued to study the nutrient content of food, the balancing techniques of flavors, and how to tweak my recipes to capture just the right amount of taste and texture with the least amount of fat and sugar, I found myself falling in love with plant-based foods in a way I never had before. After all, it was by the harmonizing of plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, and grains that I was able to replicate my "I want a pickle!" moment over and over again.



The stars aligned, the arts won me over, and for a time, the science of my world faded into black and white, and all I could see was the blasting colors of beautiful food that tasted as good as it looked. Tiny seeds from the earth springing into picturesque produce prepared and styled with intention, suspended on the ropes of composition and lighting, gracefully spread over a canvas of a photograph, imprinting with it the flavor, texture, and mood of the story.

While pursuing my education and professional career, I met many people across a wide spectrum in society who believed vegan, plant-based, healthier cooking was too difficult, too expensive, unappealing, and time-consuming. As you can imagine, this new culinary and artistic phase in my life provided me with a fresh perspective that helped fuel the design of a resource to debunk these very myths. I like to think about these recipes as the “bait” to invite people to explore what balanced, flavorful, and wholesome plant-based eating could look like. It shouldn’t stop here, though. This resource is intended to create a starting place that is as much moderate as it is effective. There’s something in this book for everyone, whether for kids, parties, romantic dinners, meal prepping, it’s all here.

We live in a day and age where presentation is everything. We see food before we taste it. How the food looks, how it is styled and prepared, will influence whether or not we will want it, which is why food photography is such an integral part of a cookbook’s spirit. With my love of recipe creation, cooking, food styling, photography, and my credentials, it only seemed inevitable for me to create a resource of this kind that I could share with you. Here I’ve compiled my favorite recipes and thoughts on nutrition and plant-based cooking and put it all in a book that would look just as good sitting on your coffee table as it would be covered with flour and almond milk on your kitchen counter. This is a little piece of myself. It is my deepest hope that you will discover the beauty and elegance of creating masterpieces with clean foods and that this will be the glue that adheres you to a lifestyle rich in wholeness, health, and vitality!

A stylized, cursive signature of the author, Fay Kazzi, in a dark grey color.

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## RECIPE CREATION

When I first started creating recipes, I didn't know what I was doing. It was a matter of working with whatever I had available. Trial and error were my guides, adding a little of this and a little of that until I liked what I was tasting. I remember the first time I put together a protein bar for a camping trip to Mammoth I was preparing for. I'm not a fan of the protein bars you get from the store, mostly because I didn't care much for how they taste. So I opened up my pantry of dried fruits, nuts, and nut butters and combined a little bit of everything. I'm not quite sure how it happened, but I was pleasantly surprised with how good they tasted, and with how nutrient-dense it was. You mean nutrient-dense food can still taste amazing? I guess so!

There wasn't a lot of thinking that went into creating recipes at that time. I usually based it on whatever I had in my fridge or my pantry, since going to the store just to create a new recipe that I could photograph wasn't a luxury I had at the time, and certainly wasn't anything I was getting paid for yet! Soon enough, though, as I became more skillful in my ingredient selection, I put a lot more effort into studying out flavor profiles of individual produce items. I then developed a formula for building the recipe around that one item. I felt like it came natural to me, and I began to find these individual foods inspiring with their natural beauty and flavors.

Here's a little glimpse of what a recipe being developed in my mind would look like:

"A client requests mushrooms to be highlighted in an upcoming recipe. I love working with cremini mushrooms. They are mild in flavor, meaty in texture, and have a picturesque brownish hue; this would pair beautifully with fresh herbs like thyme and parsley. These herbs can complement the mushroom's existing earthiness without overpowering it. Then we'd need a little something to elevate the mushrooms and marry these flavors, and what better than a translucent, savory roux made out of a base of reduced onions, garlic, and the juices of the sweating mushrooms? Yes, we're on to something! Now, a star component, something to be enveloped with this deliciously prepared blanket of layered savors . . . Of course, perfectly cooked pappardelle noodles. Ah, yes, this is it. I'll call it Herbed Mushroom Stroganoff!"

Can you feel me sighing with delight as I reminisce how starting with a pack of cremini mushrooms transformed into this delicious recipe? Today, I see recipe development and cooking as a form of art, an endless canvas to paint on, muse, and to enjoy.





## RESOURCES & METHODS

### PANTRY

For this cookbook, here are a few staple pantry items that will be convenient for you to have available when you want to throw something together:

Nuts*/seeds	Pasta	Grains	Legumes/Cans	Flours	Plant Milks
Cashews	Linguini	Quinoa	Black beans	All-purpose	Almond milk
Almonds	Pappardelle	Brown Rice	Chickpeas	almond	Hempseed milk
Walnuts	Orzo	Round Rice	Lentils	Almond meal	Coconut milk†
Pecans	Rice noodles	Basmati Rice	Roasted tomatoes	Coconut flour	
Peanuts	Vermicelli	Bulgur	Tomato paste	Tapioca flour	
Pine nuts	Gnocchi			Flaxseed meal	
Hempseeds					
Sesame seeds					
Chia seeds					

  

Nut butters*	Baking	Sweeteners	Oils**/fats	Seasonings	Condiments
Peanut butter	Baking soda	Maple syrup	Vegetable oil	Cumin	Apple cider vinegar
Cashew butter	Baking Powder	Agave	Grape-seed oil	Paprika	White wine vinegar
Almond butter	Vegan chocolate	Honey (optional)	Coconut oil	Cayenne	Balsamic vinegar
Tahini	chips	Coconut sugar	Olive oil	Garam masala	Ketchup
	Cocoa powder	Cane sugar	Avocado oil	Rosemary	Vegan mayonnaise
	Dark cocoa powder‡	Medjool dates	Sesame oil	Basil	Blossom water††
				Thyme	
				Cinnamon	
				Turmeric	
				Nutritional yeast	

\*When referring to nuts, note, in most cases, we are using raw nuts, unless otherwise specified. For nut butters, we are always using all-natural nut butters.

†Coconut milk in this book is referring to canned coconut milk, not the coconut milk in cartons. I've used several different kinds, but the best I'd recommend for these recipes is Thai Kitchen Coconut Milk.

‡Dark cocoa powder: You'll notice the chocolate color in many of my dessert recipes is quite dark, which is my preference. That's because I like to combine regular cocoa powder with a much darker one, such as King Arthur Flour Double-Dutch Dark Cocoa Powder. You can find this on Amazon. To achieve what I have, you can go with equal parts of regular cocoa powder and a dark one.

\*\*For the oils, you can use grape-seed oil or avocado oil in the place of any use of vegetable oil in these recipes.

††Blossom water is used for some of the Lebanese desserts in this book, such as the baklava. If you don't have a Mediterranean store nearby, you can order Orange Blossom Water on Amazon as well.



## METHODS



### Soaking cashews

You'll see a lot of raw cashews used in this cookbook as the base for sauces, dressings, and desserts. Cashew is the main "cream" ingredient of the plant-based world. Soaking cashews helps to enhance the creaminess we are aiming to achieve. It's ideal to soak them overnight, but you could get away with soaking them in warm water for two hours before using them in a recipe. Depending on the recipe, you will usually add some form of fluid, such as almond milk or water, and blend it with the cashew using a highspeed blender until completely smooth and creamy. If you're ever really in a rush and didn't prepare ahead, you could soak them in boiling water for at least 30 minutes and achieve similar results to having soaked them overnight. If you have extra and need to store them, drain the water, and store them in the fridge, otherwise they will go bad.

### Canned coconut milk

I use quite a bit of this ingredient, and you can think about this as the "other cream" of the plant-based world. For those who might be allergic to nuts and the recipe calls for cashews, you can substitute it with canned coconut milk. There's a wide variety of full-fat coconut milk options you can get, but I would recommend the canned Thai Kitchen Coconut Milk, preferably organic, just because I find that it yields the creamiest and smoothest solid part, and it separates well from the clear liquid, which for some of the recipes we will discard. The best way to do this is to place the can in the fridge overnight, which causes the solid cream layer to harden and will allow you to easily scoop out that layer. You can use the clear fluid in a smoothie if you prefer not to waste it.

### Sweeteners

The main sweetener I use in my recipes is maple syrup. I prefer this over-processed white sugar because it has a lower glycemic index and contains a good amount of minerals. It's still considered sugar to the body, but somewhat better. You will see me using dates as well. Some of my desserts are entirely sweetened with dates only. They are a fantastic, nutrient-dense sugar alternative. Some recipes will call for coconut sugar or cane sugar, but these are used sparingly in comparison with what recipes like these usually call for. There is a camp in the vegan community that is completely against honey, and one that isn't. I'm in the camp that doesn't oppose the use of honey, but not many of my recipes call for it, and you can always replace it with agave or maple syrup.

### Vinegars & acids

I've been asked a few times in magazine interviews what I think is the most underutilized ingredient in our pantries, and my answer is always vinegar! I use vinegar to help sharpen the flavor of my vinaigrettes, dressings, and desserts (especially the chocolate ones!). Most of the recipes call for small amounts (1–2 tsp), but it does make a difference. Acid is an important factor in flavor balance and development. Usually you get this acidity from dairy products such as cheeses and creams in recipes. Vinegars and acids, such as lemon and lime in vegan dishes, can play an important role in replacing/mimicking these richly acidic ingredients.

### Flax-egg

You're probably already familiar with the flax-egg creation. In this book, I've chosen not to use any alternative ingredients (aside from nut-based milks), such as vegan egg substitutes, meats, and cheeses. I'm not against them, but I prefer to utilize more plant-based ingredients to create versions of these since they're less processed and don't contain the unwanted chemicals and preservatives. The flax-egg is 1 Tbsp of flaxseed meal to 3 Tbsp of warm water, which equates to the adhesive properties of 1 egg. When you leave the flaxseed to sit with the water for a few minutes, it thickens and forms a sticky consistency that can be used in baking cakes or making pancakes. The idea is not to overmix your batter once you add it, which is usually the last ingredient since you don't want to weaken the flax-egg's sticky properties.

## TOOLS

### Cooking knives

Cooking as I know it completely changed once I invested in a good set of kitchen knives, and I'm pretty obsessed with them. It only contains three knives—one large chef knife, one medium chef knife, and one precision knife—but aside from a serrated knife for cutting bread, these are all I use. The set I have is a bit pricey for just three knives, but it is so worth it! The brand is called Global. They are Japanese blades, and yes, they can slice off a finger if you're not careful. Sharp knives are to be respected, handled with care, and regularly maintained with the use of a straightening rod. There's nothing quite so satisfying as getting through a pile of carrots with a good chef's knife versus a dull knife! Since plant-based cooking requires a lot of preparation in terms of chopping fresh produce, understanding and respecting the use of sharp, good-quality knives will go a long way in creating a long-term commitment to a plant-based lifestyle. I also recommend a large, heavy-duty cutting board. I use an industrial high-density polyethylene cutting board in my kitchen. It's heavy and bulky, but super sturdy, has a textured surface that helps hold food in place, and doesn't harbor bacteria.

### High-speed blender

For creating the plant-based creams, sauces, and smoothies in this cookbook, nothing quite does the work of breaking down these more fibrous ingredients to minute particles like a good high-speed blender. I used a Vitamix to do a lot of the

blending in this cookbook, and I understand it is pricey, but definitely worth the investment if you want to go fully plant-based. You can use other high-speed blenders if that's what you have. I'm only sharing with you what I know works best, but other good-quality blenders shouldn't fall too far behind in terms of a final product.

### Food processor

You don't have to go too fancy with a food processor. I use a pretty cheap one I bought online. The point is the recipes requiring processing just need quick chopping and integration more than actually breaking down of the ingredients. So, whatever you already have at home should be fine. If you don't have one and don't want to break the bank, I'd recommend the Hamilton Food Processor for under \$50 on Amazon.

### Pots & pans

No need to overthink this area. A regular set of stainless steel pots containing a small saucepot, medium pot, and large pot will do it in the pots department for this book. For pans, you'll need a nonstick pan, and a few medium-sized stainless steel skillets will be helpful. I also recommend a cast-iron skillet, which you'll need for some of the recipes.

### Measuring equipment

A basic set of measuring cups and spoons will do it for this book based on the U.S. customary units of measurement, e.g., cup (C), pound (lb), tablespoon (Tbsp), ounce (oz), etc.





Brea



breakfast





# ORANGE-ZESTED OAT WAFFLES & CHOCOLATE MAPLE SYRUP

GLUTEN FREE

MAKES

...« 4 »...

WAFFLES

Let's take this wide-eyed childhood favorite of ours and douse it with a serving of healthy, for an irresistible and guilt-free twist. Switch up the usual wheat flour with oat flour that is gluten free, easy on the gut, and even protective against heart disease. Some of the benefits, per studies of dietary oats, include its plasma cholesterol-lowering effects, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects, and maintenance of arterial function. Craving chocolate syrup, but not feeling too good about empty calories? Try making it yourself with some organic cocoa powder, maple syrup, and a little coconut oil. Yes, good-looking food can do a body good!

## INGREDIENTS

### **Batter**

1 ½ C oat flour  
¾ C almond milk  
¼ C macadamia nuts, ground  
3 Tbsp coconut oil  
2 flax-eggs (2 Tbsp of ground  
flaxseed + 6 Tbsp warm water)  
1 Tbsp maple syrup  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp orange zest  
½ tsp vanilla extract  
¼ tsp salt

### **Chocolate Maple Syrup**

3 Tbsp maple syrup  
3 Tbsp coconut oil  
1 Tbsp dark cocoa powder

### **Toppings**

Fresh strawberries  
Coconut cream, optional  
Powder sugar  
Orange zest

## ⋮ DIRECTIONS

1. Mix in all dry ingredients first, then set aside. Mix all wet ingredients, then add to dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly.
2. For the flax-eggs, mix together until thickened. Incorporate into your batter.
3. Divide into 4 parts. Use each part for one waffle, with your waffle maker.
4. For the chocolate maple syrup, microwave coconut oil with maple syrup, and mix well. Then add cocoa powder and mix thoroughly. Drizzle on to waffles with toppings as desired. Enjoy!





# COCONUT-CRUSTED FRENCH TOAST FINGERS

SERVES

...« 2 ~ 4 »...

I had a sudden urge for French toast one morning and challenged myself to create a vegan version. But what is French toast without eggs, you might think? Well, I figured if we covered it with a tasty enough batter and fused it in crispy coconut, that you might not even notice it was missing! But then, I was pleasantly surprised to find it not only looked incredible, but tasted *better* than any other French toast I have ever had. You might say, “Well, eggs have B-12, though.” And I’ll just say, “No worries, so does nutritional yeast!”

## INGREDIENTS

12-inch whole-wheat French bread  
1 C almond milk  
¼ C shredded coconut  
2 Tbsp flour  
2 Tbsp maple syrup  
1 Tbsp canola oil  
2 tsp nutritional yeast  
1 tsp cinnamon  
¼ tsp salt  
¼ tsp vanilla extract

### **Toppings**

Fruit of your choice  
Maple syrup  
Powdered sugar

## ⋮ DIRECTIONS

1. Cut 1-inch slices of French bread. Cut each slice into 2–3 strips.
2. Take the almond milk and whisk with the flour, maple syrup, nutritional yeast, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla extract until fully incorporated.
3. Oil a nonstick pan and set to medium heat. Place coconut on a plate. Soak the strips in your mix and roll on to the coconut, then place in your hot pan. Cook each side in the pan until golden brown and crispy, about 2 minutes each side.
4. Let cool on a metal rack. Serve with maple syrup and fruit of choice. Enjoy!





# BLUEBERRY OATMEAL

MAKES  
...« 2 Bowls »...

This is my husband's go-to breakfast on slower mornings when he's not in a rush. He feels it sets him up to have a great day! This is also a good breakfast option for individuals who have stomach sensitivities, which he has to deal with from time to time. It's easy to digest and still manages to be very comforting and delicious. Oats are high in complex carbohydrates and soluble fibers, which means they keep you feeling full longer and can even help to control cholesterol. Also, blueberries are high in antioxidants, which are important to have for that early morning immune boost we all want!

## INGREDIENTS

2 ½ C almond milk or water  
1 ½ C rolled oats  
1 Tbsp maple syrup  
½ tsp vanilla extract  
½ C frozen blueberries

### **Top with**

Fresh blueberries  
Shaved almonds

## ⋮ DIRECTIONS

1. Place your almond milk or water in a pot and bring to a boil. Once boiling, add the oats and remaining ingredients, except for the frozen blueberries. Set to a simmer, and cook for 7–10 minutes, until softened. For a creamier porridge, opt for the almond milk.
2. Once cooked, pour into bowls, and lightly mix in your frozen blueberries. They will bleed nicely and give a pretty hue to your oatmeal. If you cook it directly with the blueberries, your oatmeal will turn a bluish-gray and may not look as appetizing.
3. Top with fresh blueberries and your shaved almonds. Enjoy!





# COCONUT RICE PUDDING WITH MANGO

SERVES

...« 6 »...

When I was going to school, my mom used to make large batches of rice pudding and put them in little cups and bowls stored in the fridge as a quick breakfast and snack option for us growing teens. She used to add pineapple chunks to it. Here is a play on this school-time classic using mango instead. This is fantastic since it is 100% plant-based, contains no dairy, but still is so creamy thanks to the starchiness of round rice combined with the buttery goodness of coconut milk. This could be a dessert or breakfast option. Normally a batch of rice pudding like this would call for double or triple the amount of sugar, but we're only using a little over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a cup. This rice pudding holds well in the fridge and is also a fun, dairy-free snack option that kids will love!

## INGREDIENTS

1  $\frac{1}{4}$  C rice  
4 C almond milk  
3 C water  
1 can coconut milk  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  C + 1 Tbsp cane sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla extract  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt  
A few dashes of cinnamon

### **Toppings**

Shredded coconut  
Crushed pistachio  
Mango

## ⋮ DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, add the water and the rice first, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, set heat to low-medium and continue to boil for 10 minutes. Stir frequently.
2. Now add the almond milk. Once boiling again, allow to continue for another 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Now add the coconut milk, sugar, and remaining ingredients. Bring again to a boil, and then let simmer for about 10–15 minutes while stirring frequently. You will notice halfway through that the mixture will begin to thicken.
4. Once done, the mixture should be soft and creamy. Turn off heat. You can serve it hot or let it cool down and allow to chill in the fridge, whichever you prefer. I personally prefer it chilled. Enjoy!