VEGAN MEXICAN FOOD
WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in Vegan Mexican Food. In this booklet, you will find delicious vegan Mexican food recipes and information on the power of your food choices! Whether you are interested in learning how to eat without harming animals or understanding how eating more fruits and vegetables can benefit your health and the environment, this booklet will help you understand how you can enjoy delicious and nutritious food without harming animals, yourself, or the Earth.

As a proud vegan Chicanx and the founder of Food Empowerment Project (F.E.P.), it is important for me to share with the community how we can enjoy delicious foods without causing suffering to nonhuman animals. I also want everyone to have a better understanding of how colonization impacted the foods of our ancestors and how we are still dealing with those ramifications today. We should have the right to eat healthier, so we can thrive. Our culture is filled with compassion, music, colors, laughter, and, of course, the strength of our families, and that should not include dying from diet-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes. We can and should take back our health as we have so much to celebrate.

In this booklet you will also find information on farm worker justice. Protecting farm workers is critical to F.E.P. as a significant number of Latinx grow and harvest produce that feeds the world.

This Vegan Mexican Food booklet was made possible by volunteers, who donated recipes and photos, and a talented team of writers, editors, translators, and a designer. We are so happy to be able to share this resource with you!

For more recipes, please visit www.veganmexicanfood.com and please consider donating your authentic, homemade food creations! We are a family – unidxs – and are always welcoming more recipe ideas to inspire compassion for the animals.

Abrazos,

lauren Ornelas
Founder/ Executive Director
Food Empowerment Project
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Cover photo by Kirby Johnson
WHAT IS VEGANISM?

Veganism in its most basic sense is about trying to eliminate suffering in the world by not causing harm to animals. With so much suffering in the world, veganism is one way to reduce the suffering of nonhuman animals, and as you read more, it has a big impact on so many areas of our world. The best news is that vegans enjoy a wide range of delicious and nutritionally vibrant plant-based foods and believe we can reduce some of the suffering in the world by not consuming anything derived from nonhuman animals or insects. For instance, vegans extend care to other species by avoiding “meat,” eggs, milk, fishes and other aquatic life, and honey. Being vegan also involves expanding our circle of care to other aspects of our life beyond food, and thinking about the opportunities for living compassionately in terms of what we wear, what kinds of products we use, and what kinds of entertainment we support. For example, vegans aim to avoid the use of animal-based products, including leather, fur, wool, silk, or down, and skin- and body-care products or cosmetics that include animal-based ingredients or were tested on animals. Vegans will additionally opt for enjoying the wide range of entertainment and family activities that don’t exploit animals or keep them in captivity. This means avoiding circuses that use animals, zoos, rodeos, aquaria, and marine parks. While it is impossible to entirely avoid harming other species, vegans aim to reduce and eliminate, as much as possible, their harmful impacts. The remarkable thing about focusing on the power of your food choices is that it’s a form of activism you can engage in several times a day!

Many people choose veganism because they care deeply about nonhuman animals and don’t want to participate in the suffering and violence that animals experience for the production of food, clothing, cosmetics, and entertainment. We know that we share this wonderful planet with animals, who have rich inner lives and social bonds with one another, including those who live in oceans and lakes. They experience love, joy, frustration, pain, and a whole range of other emotions. Sadly, animals are exploited in a variety of ways (such as farming, product testing, and entertainment) where they experience bodily violence, psychological torment, and the trauma of repeated separation from their family and friends. For instance, cows in the dairy industry are forcibly impregnated over and over again, go through incredible anguish when their baby calves are
taken away from them within a few hours or days of birth, and they are milked intensively until they are deemed “spent” and sent to slaughter long before their natural lifespan is up. Animals suffer tremendously so that humans can consume their bodies in many different forms. We believe a primary reason to go vegan is to show compassion and respect for other species by not causing them harm.

The Humane Myth

Have you ever seen products labeled as “humanely raised” or “humanely slaughtered”? Some farms that raise animals for food brand their products with these marketing terms. Consumers concerned with the welfare of animals will often choose products labeled with promises of “humaneness,” but these terms can be confusing and misleading. In reality, nearly all animals raised for food are forcibly reproduced (usually through artificial insemination), separated from their young and other family members, and slaughtered in adolescence. It’s important to know what labels mean and how they are used by the industry to mislead consumers. Here are a few common examples used by the egg industry: Cage free refers to eggs raised by hens who are housed in a building or enclosure without the use of cages. It doesn’t mean they get to live outside or are treated with care and consideration. Free range refers to eggs raised by hens who are housed in a building or enclosure with continuous access to outdoors. It’s important to note that the U.S. government does not specify whether hens actually need to spend any time outdoors, just that they have “access,” and, in fact, that access might just be a small opening that leads to a screened-in area where only a limited number of hens can be outdoors.

Knowing what labels actually mean can help to dispel the humane myth. If you care about animals and you don’t want to cause them harm, stay away from all animal products. Knowledge is power! Food is power!

Veganism & the Environment

In addition to being compassionate for animals, veganism is also better for the environment. Both large and small-scale farms that raise animals have profoundly negative consequences on our air, water, and soil quality. Farmed animals contaminate surrounding waterways, killing off huge areas of aquatic life and creating marine dead zones. Air and water contamination poses
Many people of all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds are increasingly choosing veganism for its positive impacts on their individual and community health. With time, there continues to be an increased understanding that foods high in processed and animal-based ingredients are implicated in many of the major diseases and causes of mortality, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers. Whole food, plant-based diets are growing in popularity not only for their ability to meet the nutritional needs of humans at all stages of life, but also as a way to prevent some of these diet-related diseases. Communities of color and low-income communities, especially, experience high rates of diet-related diseases due to a lack of access to healthy foods, and we know this a major problem as a result of manure disposal, chemical usage, and disposal practices, especially since there are typically no waste treatment facilities for farms. These forms of pollution disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities, as factory farms and related industries are frequently found in or near these communities. As a result, people living nearby experience a range of health issues (e.g., cancers, respiratory disease, and skin ailments), which is called environmental racism. Animal agriculture is also highly resource-intensive, demanding extreme levels of water use, land clearing, and deforestation (in the U.S. and around the world). Following a vegan lifestyle isn’t free from environmental impact, but choosing veganism dramatically lowers your carbon footprint and keeps you from contributing to some of the worst forms of environmental degradation and injustice.

*Veganism Nutrition & Community Health*

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Colonization & the Diet

Many pre-colonial Latinx and Indigenous eating practices didn’t include regular or much consumption of animal-based ingredients. The European colonization of North and South America—through settler colonialism and chattel slavery—enforced on colonized communities new diets that were heavy in animal-based ingredients, while traditional Latinx and Indigenous foods were routinely disparaged by colonizers and made to seem inferior. These colonial diets have carried forward to shape present-day norms around eating. Farmed animals were also an important part of settler colonialism—early on, cows and horses were used to occupy the lands of Indigenous peoples and native animal species. Ranching, in particular, was used to justify the mass genocide of human communities and also drove some animals, such as bison, to near-extinction. Supporting contemporary ranching and farming by eating “meat,” dairy, and eggs actively sustains settler colonialism mentality, and it’s resulting in continuing injustices for people, animals, and the environment. The way early colonization shaped the diet of colonized communities dramatically altered cultural practices of traditional eating and has led to many communities of color struggling with colonial-diet-related diseases. We know eating a vegan diet can be a powerful way to challenge the colonization of the diet and take pride in the foods we eat.
**Lactose Normal**

The majority of people of color (roughly 50 million people in the United States) do not possess the enzyme required to break down dairy foods. Most often referred to as lactose intolerance (a term that implies there is something wrong with those who don’t digest the milk of another species), Food Empowerment Project (F.E.P.) coined the term lactose normal to reject the tendency to frame those who do not digest lactose as abnormal. Making high-lactose foods the norm has long been a form of dietary colonization, both in the past as colonial diets were introduced and forcibly replaced non-colonial food traditions, and in the present with the continued non-availability of lactose-free (i.e., dairy alternatives) foods, especially in areas where people of color live. Having access to nondairy foods is an important step in decolonizing the diet.

**Slaughterhouse and Factory Farm Workers**

As if there weren’t enough reasons already to go vegan (for the animals, for the environment, for human health), the plight of those working in animal agriculture adds another compelling reason to not support animal consumption. The human laborers employed by slaughterhouses and factory farms are a highly exploited group, comprised primarily of people of color, immigrants (both documented and undocumented), and people with felony convictions who, because of discriminatory hiring practices, have trouble finding work elsewhere. Nearly all slaughterhouse and factory farm workers have low incomes and take work in these spaces because they have few or no other options. This work is some of the most dangerous in society, and the speed with which workers have to perform their jobs causes repetitive stress injuries, accidents (sometimes fatal), and psychological harm. Choosing a vegan lifestyle is therefore one way to avoid supporting this particular form of exploitative labor.

**Eating on a Budget**

We know it’s not always easy for everyone to go vegan, as many people aren’t paid a living wage or may lack access to healthy foods. We advocate supporting living-wage efforts to help everyone afford healthy foods. For people who have the ability to live on a budget, these are some tips to help you eat vegan with limited funds. Buying foods in bulk, where bulk food buying is a possibility, is often cheaper than buying the pre-packaged option. Buying dried beans instead of canned, for instance, and dry grains in larger quantities, is usually more cost effective. Community buying can be a great option for purchasing food in larger, discounted quantities, both because it makes it more affordable and because communities can
create networks to share the burden of accessing foods that may require some travel to reach. Working out a collaborative buying agreement with others in your community could involve different community members going to different stores to save time, or it could involve buying (online or in-person) a large quantity of grains or dried legumes to be shared. It is unfortunate that farmers’ markets are often held at times when many working people cannot attend and they aren’t always promoted in various languages, but many are increasingly accepting Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits/EBT, and some even have programs that provide accompanying discounts or ways to increase the impact of each dollar spent to offset the costs of farmers’ market purchasing. At a more structural level, more diverse forms of activism oriented around access to healthy foods are needed, where people can grow their own food and businesses like worker-owned cooperatives can flourish, where the money and successes can stay in the community and help that community to thrive.

_A More Ethical Veganism_

Just because it’s vegan doesn’t mean that it’s cruelty free! There are many other areas of violence and exploitation to take into consideration in a vegan lifestyle. Grave injustices occur in the treatment of human farm workers and laborers involved in the production of produce and other foods that vegans regularly eat. We know that learning about these issues can help to ensure eating a diet that reflects a commitment to nonviolence, justice, and compassion so we can eat with our ethics.
U.S. Farm Workers & Slavery

Have you ever thought about the people behind the scenes when it comes to the food on your plate? The plight of farm workers (including children) who labor to grow and harvest produce is a core issue in making a more just food system. Farm workers labor under highly exploitative conditions in the United States and around the world to bring produce
to market. They earn below-poverty-level wages for their work, are exposed to extreme heat, are forced to live in substandard housing (while many are homeless), are subjected to physical and sexual abuse, and are routinely exposed to agricultural chemicals. Farm workers in the United States have an average life expectancy of 49 years as a result of these conditions. Within the United States, slavery in agriculture is ongoing and involves confinement; forced labor with no pay; psychological, physical, and sexual abuse; and human trafficking. Recent examples of the latter include workers from Mexico and Guatemala enslaved on citrus farms in Florida and the Carolinas; migrant farm workers on tomato farms in Immokalee, Florida; and Haitian farm workers on pea and bean farms in southern Florida.

When possible, choosing organic produce is one way to reduce harm for farm workers, since it eliminates or reduces toxic exposure to pesticides and herbicides. Another powerful way to make a difference is to honor boycotts called by farm workers themselves to stand in solidarity with worker-led labor movements. Connect with F.E.P. through our website and social media to learn more about other ways of fighting for farm workers’ rights.

*Child Labor & Slavery in the Chocolate Industry*

Do you love chocolate? Have you ever wondered where your chocolate was produced? Chocolate is one of those pleasures some people say they simply can’t live without, and luckily there are plenty of chocolate products that are vegan. But cocoa production is a complicated and often highly exploitative endeavor for the humans who work harvesting and
We know that becoming vegan is an ongoing process of learning and reflecting on how we can live more ethically and compassionately. This involves staying informed and considering the effects of our dietary choices on the animals, humans, and environment around us, and we’re aware that there are always more opportunities for greater ethical consideration. As we mentioned earlier, just because it’s vegan doesn’t mean it’s cruelty free. Some of our favorite vegan foods further encourage us to think ethically about our everyday food choices. Bananas—the most commonly consumed fruit in the United States—are most often grown and distributed under conditions of extreme injustice involving violent labor practices; corporate ownership and consolidation; environmental devastation; and colonialism, sexism, and racism.

Much coffee production involves child labor, slavery, environmental destruction, and the exploitation of nonhuman animals. Wine production involves the widespread use of farm workers employed precariously and seasonally, and wine often uses animal-based filtration systems in its production. Palm oil, an ingredient in many processed foods, is implicated in the massive destruction of land and forests that are home to Indigenous communities and nonhuman animal species like orangutans.

One of the inspiring things about going vegan is how it can be an ongoing journey of growth, new knowledge, and continued ethical reflection that makes space for understanding how we are connected and accountable to others. Food Empowerment Project is here to help you on your journey by providing information on our website, making recommendations, and constantly working to share resources for how we can all live more ethically through the power of our food choices!

An Ongoing Ethical Journey—Food Is Power!
ENTRÉES

Photo by Alex Vargas
TOFUEVOS REVUELTOS

by Alex Vargas

1 (16-ounce) package of firm tofu, drained
1 cup red bell pepper, diced
1 cup yellow bell pepper, diced
1 cup onion, diced
2 potatoes, peeled and diced
1 pinch of ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon of turmeric (for color)
2 tablespoons of olive oil

1. Heat olive oil in medium skillet pan on medium heat.

2. Add diced red and yellow peppers, potato, and onion. Sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to keep ingredients from sticking to pan.

3. Shred drained tofu into small pieces using your hands. Add tofu to skillet. Add salt, cumin, pepper, garlic powder, and turmeric. Let cook for 10 minutes. You can serve with fried beans and avocado. Enjoy!

Photo by Alex Vargas
ALBONDIGAS SOUP

by Evangelina Pérez-Bechtel

Soup

2 quarts of filtered water
½ of a medium cabbage, sliced
1 slice of a large onion, separated
1½ cups organic stewed tomatoes, crushed
½ cup of cooked brown rice
2 tablespoons organic tomato sauce
1 tablespoon of lemon juice
1 tablespoon rice bran oil or vegetable oil
2 teaspoons Himalayan salt
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
½ teaspoon oregano, crushed

Albondigas

2 ¾ cups water, divided
2 cups gluten-free oats (if gluten is not an issue plain oats are fine)
1 cup cooked brown rice
1 cup portobello mushroom, minced
½ cup onion, minced
½ cup red bell pepper, minced
½ cup minced pecans, finely chopped
¼ cup walnuts, finely chopped
¼ cup fresh mint, finely chopped (optional)
2 tablespoons organic tomato sauce
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon nutritional yeast
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon Himalayan salt
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon black pepper
Soup Directions

1. Heat 2 quarts of water in a large pot on medium-high heat.

2. Add the cabbage, crushed tomatoes, onions, garlic, salt, oil, lemon juice, and tomato sauce.

3. Cover the pot and allow to cook for approximately 20-30 minutes while you make the albondigas. If the cabbage is tender and you have not completed making the albondigas, turn off the heat and set the soup aside.

Albondigas Directions

1. Bring 2 ½ cups water to a boil.

2. Add the oats. At a low boil, allow the oats to cook for 7 minutes while continually stirring until thick. If the oats become too thick, an additional ¼ cup of water can be added.

3. Remove from heat and cover for 5 minutes.

4. In a non-stick pan on medium heat, add ¼ cup of water. Once hot, add all the vegetables and nuts in the pan to water sauté. Do not stir.

5. Once the edges of the vegetables begin to caramelize, stir while adding 2-4 tablespoons of water. This keeps the ingredients from sticking and burning. As the water evaporates, continue to add 2-4 tablespoons of water and stir. Repeat this process until vegetables are soft. Remove from heat.

6. Add tomato sauce to the vegetable and nut mixture.

7. Add 2 to 2 ½ cups of the cooked oats to the pan and mix well to incorporate the vegetable and nut mixture into the oats.

8. Add the oat mixture to a food processor with the “s” blade and pulse in small bursts about 10 to 12 times or about 30 seconds. The mixture should stick together.

9. Transfer the oat mixture to a large bowl. Add 1 cup of cooked brown rice. Mix until everything is well incorporated.
10. Press the mixture down until compacted.

11. Using a medium melon baller (1 ½ inch diameter) or a spoon, scoop out balls and place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

12. When all balls have been scooped, cover palms of your hands with a small amount of oil. (Olive oil or rice bran oil is recommended.)

13. Taking one ball in your hand, roll it so that the outside of the ball is lightly coated with the oil. (Note: Balls should not be saturated with oil – only a little oil is needed.) Place the ball on the lined baking sheet. Continue this process until all balls are coated.

14. Let the balls rest while preheating the oven to 375 degrees.

15. Place the balls in the oven and cook for approximately 10 minutes. Turn them over and cook them another 10 minutes. They should just begin to brown. They can be cooked up to about 30 minutes. Make sure to turn them over so they do not brown too much on one side.

16. Remove the albondigas from the oven once done and set aside until soup is ready.

**Bringing It Together**

Place 3 to 4 albondigas in a soup bowl & ladle hot soup to cover the albondigas. Garnish with your favorites- vegan sour cream, grated carrots or onions, and of course, salsa.

*Note: As the albondigas are very tender and may fall apart, do not boil them in the soup. They can be gently simmered in the soup, however; if warmed again as leftovers they will fall apart. As such, we suggest that you prepare them separately and take care when serving.*
ENCHILADAS ROJAS
by Eddie Garza and Socorro Muller Sargent
with Alex Vargas

1 batch filling, potato-chile or “chicken” (see below)
1 batch enchilada sauce
12-15 corn tortillas

Red Enchilada Sauce
(courtesy of Alex Vargas)

5 chiles guajillos or California peppers
2 cups of vegetable broth
2 garlic cloves
½ onion, rough chopped
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon of black pepper
1 inch of cinnamon stick

Potato-Chile Filling
(courtesy of Alex Vargas)

6 Russet potatoes, cubed
½ cup vegan butter
4 large dried California chiles (found in most grocery stores)
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper

“Chicken” Filling

2 tablespoons high-heat oil such as sunflower oil or canola oil
1 large red onion, finely diced
1 large green bell pepper, finely diced
1 tablespoon whole cumin seeds or 1 teaspoon ground cumin powder
2 large cloves of garlic, minced
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
8 ounces vegan “chicken,” diced
4 ounces tomato puree
½ (8-ounce) package vegan shredded cheese (approximately 1 cup)
Sea salt and pepper to taste
For Red Enchilada Sauce

1. Remove seeds from the chiles.

2. In a small pot, bring the chiles and broth to a boil over medium high heat.

3. Transfer to a blender. Add garlic cloves, onion, black pepper, cinnamon stick, and salt.

4. Blend all ingredients until pureed and set aside.

For Potato-Chile Filling

1. Bring 7 cups of water to boil in a medium pot.

2. Peel potatoes and add them to the pot. Simmer about 20 minutes until they are fully cooked (they should be fork-tender). Drain and mash in a bowl.

3. Add vegan butter, salt and pepper and mix well, then set aside.

4. Roast the green pasilla chiles by placing them directly on the elements of a gas stove or a grill. Roast evenly by turning them every 2 minutes until they are completely roasted. The skin of the chiles should be blistered and blackened as much as possible.

5. Place the chiles in a plastic bag or transfer them to a large bowl and cover with a lid.

6. Set roasted chiles aside for 10 to 15 minutes or until they’re cool enough to handle. Note: As long as chiles sit and cool for approximately 15 minutes it is not necessary to cover and steam since they will still be easy to peel. However, the steaming will continue to cook and soften the chiles, making the skin come off faster.

7. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt and teaspoon of granulated garlic and pulse to mix. If you desire, fold in the diced onions and/or chopped cilantro. Enjoy!
1. In a large skillet, sauté diced onion on medium heat until translucent.

2. Add bell pepper, cumin, garlic, and red pepper flakes until bell pepper becomes a bright green color.

3. Add vegan “chicken,” increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring constantly to brown evenly.

4. Add tomato puree and 1/2 the package of shredded vegan cheese. Mix thoroughly until vegan cheese is mostly melted.

5. Remove the skillet from heat and turn heat off.

6. Add sea salt to taste and mix thoroughly

For “Chicken” Filling
(courtesy of Eddie Garza)

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6. Add sea salt to taste and mix thoroughly

For Traditional Enchilada Assembly
(courtesy of Alex Vargas)

1. Heat ¼ inch oil in a skillet.

2. In the meantime, pour the sauce you will be using into a bowl.

3. Warm each tortilla and dip it into the sauce.

4. Place the sauced tortilla on a plate and add about 2 tablespoons of the filling in the center. Roll up to form the enchilada and place seam side down in the skillet.

5. Fry two or three enchiladas together in the skillet around 2 minutes per side.

6. Repeat with remaining tortillas and filling.

7. Garnish each serving with chopped cilantro, onion and lettuce. Enchiladas can be served with rice, salad or guacamole.
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

2. Spray each tortilla with your favorite oil spray or brush them with a little oil, and heat them in a skillet (individually or two at a time, depending on the size of the skillet).

3. Cover the bottom of a 9 x 13 inch ovenproof dish with oil spray.

4. Cover the bottom of the dish with 6 or 7 of the warmed tortillas, cutting them as needed to cover the bottom well.

5. Spoon your chosen filling mixture evenly over the tortillas.

6. Top with the remaining tortillas.

7. Gently and evenly pour the sauce over the top and cover the dish with foil.

8. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

9. If desired, remove the foil, top with shredded vegan cheese and broil until just brown and cheese is melted.
Fideo

by Crystal Tate

3–4 tablespoons olive oil
½ onion, chopped
1 (5-ounce) box of fideo vermicelli noodles
½ cup tomato sauce (which is ½ of a 14.5 ounce can)
2 cups water
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon cumin
⅛ teaspoon garlic powder

1. Sauté onion in olive oil on medium heat.

2. Once onion is pearly and translucent, add in the noodles.

3. Sauté them until they are a bit softer. They change colors quickly, so continue sautéing the noodles until you reach the toastiness you like.

4. Add in tomato sauce and water. Stir continuously. Raise the heat to high.

5. Add in salt, cumin and garlic. Stir!

6. Once it starts to bubble and boil, lower the heat to simmer.

7. Carefully taste the broth. Let it simmer about 7-8 minutes until creamy and thick. Stir often.

NOTE: Watch it closely because you do not want to cook off all of your broth before your noodles are done. You want the noodles to cook until completely softened, but don’t let them burn.
**TAMALES**

by Pedro Hernández

*For the Tamales*

6 ½ cups corn masa mix for tamales
6 cups water or vegetable broth
1 cup corn oil
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 bag of corn husks
1 recipe black bean or chili filling

*Special Equipment*

Tamal pot with rack  
(preferred; available at many grocery stores or online) or large stockpot  
with steamer insert and tight-fitting lid

Blender or food processor

*For the Black Bean Filling*

1 cup onion, rough chopped
16 cloves roasted garlic, rough chopped
½ cup olive oil
4 cups cooked black beans (from scratch or approximately three  
15-ounce cans, rinsed and drained)
4 teaspoons sherry vinegar
Salt to taste

*For the Chile Filling*

2 (14-ounce) packages of vegan ground “beef”
4 large dried California chilies (found in most grocery stores)
Salt to taste
For the Black Bean Filling

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a heavy sauté pan over medium heat and sauté the onion and garlic until translucent, approximately 10 minutes.

2. Transfer to a blender, add the black beans and vinegar, and purée until smooth.

3. Heat the remaining oil in the sauté pan over low heat, add the purée and fry, stirring constantly, for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the edges of the purée becomes crusty. Remove from heat.

4. Add salt to taste.

For the Chile Filling

1. In a dry pot or skillet, heat the chiles until soft.

2. Remove the chiles from the heat, pull off the stems and shake out the seeds.

3. Put the chiles in a blender (or food processor) with a bit of water and salt and blend until soft.

4. Adjust salt as needed.

5. Heat a skillet over medium heat, then add a splash of oil.

6. Crumble the vegan ground “beef” into the skillet, then add the purée and stir.

7. Cook, stirring, for several minutes until all the crumbles are red.
1. Soak corn husks in warm water until soft (or soak in cold water 24 hours prior). You can weigh them down with a dish to help them stay submerged.

2. In a large bowl, mix together the corn masa mix, water or broth, corn oil, salt and baking powder until well combined. The masa should be moist but hold together. To test if it's mixed well, you can roll a ball of masa in your hands and place it in warm tap water: If it floats, you are ready to go.

3. Drain the corn husks and blot them dry.

4. Spread out one corn husk in front of you and add approximately 2 tablespoons of the masa across the upper section of the husk (avoiding the narrow bottom portion of the husk). Flatten the masa into a rectangle approximately ¼ inch thick (doesn’t have to be exact, ⅛ inch - ⅓ inch is fine and depends on your personal preference of masa thickness).

5. Add a scant tablespoon of filling on the center of the masa (this amount may increase if you were more generous with spreading your masa).

6. Wrap the tamal: Folding into thirds like a letter, fold in each side of the corn husk to fold the masa over and around the filling, enclosing it inside. Fold the bottom of the husk up and underneath the tamal so that it is opposite the seam created when the sides were folded in. (The top of the tamal will not be enclosed by the husk, so make sure this end is positioned upward when placing the tamales in the steamer later.) Optional: Small strips of corn husk can be used to tie around each tamal to hold the folds in place (but generally, if your husks soaked long enough, they should fold well and this isn’t a necessary step).

7. Continue with the remaining masa and filling. The masa recipe makes approximately 2 - 3 dozen, depending on the size of your corn husks and how much masa you spread across each one.

8. Fill the pot with several inches of water, leaving several inches of space between the water and steamer rack. Bring the water to a boil.
9. Place the tamales in the tamal steamer in an even layer, cover and cook for 60 minutes, checking every 20 minutes. Add boiling water as needed to keep the steam going. (A couple optional tricks: Put a penny in your steamer so you can hear it rattle while steaming and when it stops you know you need to add more water. If you have unused corn husks leftover, lay a few over the top of your tamales in the steamer before putting on the lid, and this can help seal in the moisture a little better and help prevent your tamales from drying out.) The tamales are cooked when they feel firm and separate easily from the corn husk.

Notes

- Instead of either filling, you can use cooked vegetables such as jalapeños, potato, carrots, corn, and squash.

- It is also very easy to make a seitan chili verde filling using store-bought gluten strips and salsa verde or tomatillo sauce (found canned at most grocery stores). Just simmer the strips in the sauce until the flavors are absorbed.
SALSAS

Photo by Kirby Johnson
GREEN CHILE SALSABy Evangelina Pérez-Bechtel

10 tomatillos, outer husk removed
5 Anaheim peppers
3 jalapeño peppers
1 large onion, sliced
1 whole garlic bulb
½ cup water
1 – 2 teaspoons salt
Juice of 1 small lime
Cilantro (optional)

1. Heat oven to 425 F.

2. Remove the husk and slice tomatillos in half.

3. Slice a small portion of the top of the garlic bulb off. This will allow you to remove the cloves more easily after the garlic is roasted. Wrap garlic bulb in foil.

4. Cover a shallow baking tray with parchment paper. Place the sliced tomatillos, Anaheim peppers, jalapeños, sliced onions, and wrapped garlic bulb on the baking sheet, and place in the oven to roast.

5. Watch carefully so your peppers, onions, and tomatillos char, but do not burn. After about 20 minutes, the skins of the chiles should begin to char. You want them to be well-roasted; the char adds a rich flavor. Turn them over to char on the other side. Total time may be 30 to 40 minutes depending on your oven and the size of the ingredients.

6. When the other side is roasted, remove from the oven. Sweat the peppers by placing them in a tightly sealed container. This will help loosen the skin of the peppers and easily remove them. Keep them in the container for about 10 – 15 minutes to cool.
7. After the peppers have cooled, remove the skins. Use gloves for this process so that your hands do not burn from the hot peppers. It is okay to leave a little bit of char if you can’t remove it, but too much will not taste good.

8. For salsa that is not too spicy, remove the stem and seeds. If you love hot salsa, remove stems only.

9. Unwrap the garlic from the foil. From the bottom of the bulb, squeeze out the roasted cloves towards the top of the bulb where you sliced the top off. The garlic should be soft enough to slide right out.

10. Add garlic, onions, tomatillos, peppers, salt, water, and lime to your food processor. Begin with 1 teaspoon of salt—add more to taste if necessary.

11. Blend the ingredients in the food processor until there is an even and consistent texture. Do not over blend. If salsa is too thick, add more water.

12. Taste and adjust flavors as needed.

13. If using cilantro, add it to the mixture and pulse only 3 or 4 times. Over processing the cilantro will cause it to become bitter. Enjoy!

Photo by Kirby Johnson
**PICO DE GALLO**

*by Yolie Rios*

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice  
½ cup sweet onion, chopped  
2 cups tomatoes, chopped  
2 tablespoons jalapeño chiles or serrano chiles, minced  
½ teaspoon salt or sea salt (to taste)  
½ teaspoon pepper to taste  
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro  
Splash of favorite oil (olive oil, etc.)

1. Combine the lime juice and onions in a medium mixing bowl and allow to marinate for 30 minutes to 1 hour or more.

2. Combine the onion and lime juice mixture, tomatoes, chiles, salt, pepper, cilantro and oil in the medium mixing bowl and mix well.

3. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour and serve cold.

*Photo by Ksenia Robson*
RED SALSA

by John L. Bechtel

3 pounds of Roma tomatoes
10 – 12 yellow hot peppers
3 jalapeños
3 tablespoons salt, divided
1 teaspoon granulated garlic Note: Roasted garlic may be substituted for granulated garlic.
Diced onion (optional)
Chopped cilantro (optional)

1. Place tomatoes, peppers, and jalapeños in a large covered pot of water.

2. Add 2 tablespoons of salt to the water.

3. Boil for 30 minutes until the peppers, jalapeños, and tomatoes are cooked. Shut off heat and allow water to cool before working with the tomatoes and chiles. Once cooled, the skins will come off easier. If short on time, run tomatoes, chiles, and jalapeños under cold water until cool to the touch.

4. Peel skin off cooled tomatoes. Discard skins.

5. With a small spoon, scrape the flesh and seeds off the skin of the yellow peppers and jalapeños. Discard skins. Test the heat level of the chiles to determine how hot you would like your salsa to be.

6. Place peeled tomatoes and the flesh and seeds of the chiles (which add the heat) into the blender or food processor. Add the jalapeños last as they will really add the heat.

7. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt and teaspoon of granulated garlic and pulse to mix. If you desire, fold in the diced onions and/or chopped cilantro. Enjoy!

Allowing salsa to sit overnight helps to meld the flavor together, but we usually dive right in with the chips to enjoy it fresh!
SIDES

Photo by Jennifer Love
MEXICAN RICE

by Richard Tamez

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
¾ cup white rice
1 medium tomato, chopped
½ medium onion, chopped
1 tablespoon garlic powder
½ tablespoon salt
1 (14.5-ounce) can vegetable broth (or equivalent homemade vegetable broth)
1 cup water

1. Heat vegetable oil in cooking pan over medium to high heat.

2. Once hot, pour in the rice and brown evenly. Stir consistently so as not to burn the rice.

3. Put chopped tomato, chopped onion, the salt, and garlic powder into a blender and blend at medium speed for approximately 2 minutes, or until evenly blended.

4. Once the rice is browned evenly, pour in the tomato sauce and stir it until all the rice is coated.

5. Once ready, add the vegetable broth.

6. Add 1 cup of water and pour it into the pan. (VERY important: Do NOT stir the vegetable broth or water into the pan.)

7. Bring it to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and cover.

8. Keep an eye on the cooking rice so as not to let it burn, but do not stir. Once all the liquid is gone, turn off the heat and cover. Let it stand covered for at least ten minutes before serving.
BORRACHO BEANS

by Richard Tamez

6 cups cooked pinto beans and liquid (or 1 recipe of our Pinto Beans)
1 large tomato, diced
1 medium onion (preferably sweeter varieties like Walla Walla or Vida-
lia), diced
3 to 6 Serrano peppers (depending how picoso/spicy you want it ), diced
1 bunch of cilantro, chopped

1. Add the pinto beans, onion, tomato, and chiles into a medium-large pot and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and allow to cook for 45 minutes at a rapid simmer, stirring often.

2. Lower heat, add chopped cilantro, and allow to simmer on low for 15 minutes.

3. Serve and enjoy!

Photo by Jennifer Love
PINTO BEANS

By Richard Tamez

1 pound of dried pinto beans
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
2 tablespoons of salt
2 tablespoons of garlic powder

1. Sort and remove any misshapen beans. Then, wash pinto beans thoroughly and rinse.

2. Put the beans in a large pot and fill it with water to cover the beans with at least 2 inches of water.

3. Add the vegetable oil, salt and garlic.

4. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce the heat to the minimum setting on the stove and leave overnight (or let cook on low for at least 8 hours).

5. Once the beans are cooked and tender, add salt to taste.

NOTE: For first-time overnight cooks, the pot must be large enough to hold enough water so that there is no risk of all of the water cooking-out before morning and burning the beans. I recommend at least a gallon pot to avoid this problem. If everything goes as planned, you should wake up to the smell of freshly cooked pinto beans. Believe me, it’s second only to the smell of freshly roasted coffee in the morning.

Photo by Jennifer Love
CONCHAS
by Oscar Narváez of The Chunky Scones

For the Dough

2 cups of high-protein flour (bread flour with 4 grams of protein or more per ¼ cup)
¼ cup of sugar
1¼ cup of warm water
½ teaspoon of dry baker’s yeast
¼ teaspoon of salt

For the Paste

½ cup of high-protein flour (bread flour with 4 grams of protein or more per ¼ cup)
½ cup of powdered sugar
2 teaspoons (add 3 teaspoons or more, if you want it extra chocolatey) of cocoa powder, peanut butter or desired flavoring*
About ¼ cup of coconut oil

*See F.E.P. Chocolate List for recommended brands

For the Dough- Step 1

1. Measure 2 cups of high-protein flour and put them in a mixing bowl.

2. Measure 1/4 cup of sugar and add it to your bowl. Mix well with a whisk until the flour and sugar are hard to differentiate from one another.

3. Add 1 ¼ cup of warm water to the mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly until a uniform dough is formed. A silicone spatula works best to mix all the ingredients! Cover your bowl with a damp towel or a plastic bag (to prevent your dough from drying out) and let rest for 30 minutes.
Step 2

1. After the 30 minutes have passed, measure ½ of a teaspoon of dry baker’s yeast and add it to your dough.

2. Measure ¼ teaspoon of salt and add it to your dough.

3. Hand-mix your dough. Wet your hand with warm water 2-4 times to prevent dough from sticking to your hand.

4. Mix your dough thoroughly until you have mixed well all the ingredients and your dough is elastic and cohesive. Let rest for one to two hours or until dough has doubled in size.

For the Paste

1. In a clean mixing bowl, add ½ cup of high-protein flour and ½ cup of powdered sugar. At this point, you can add the flavor for your concha paste. For example, if it is a chocolate concha, add 2 teaspoons (add 3 teaspoons or more if you want it extra chocolatey) of cocoa powder to your bowl. Mix well with a whisk.

2. Melt ¼ of cup of coconut oil and add it to your bowl. Mix well using a silicone spatula (recommended).

3. With your hands, form the paste into a ball. Cut in 6 equal pieces.

To Make Your Conchas

1. Find a clean surface to work. Any countertop can be used as your workstation.

2. Grab a handful of flour and dust your countertop. This is done to prevent your dough from sticking to the surface.

3. On the flour dusted area, pour your dough that has been resting and should have risen to double its size by now. If it has not risen to double in size, let it rest until it has done so and then proceed with this step.

4. With a kitchen knife, cut your dough into 6 or more pieces. Shape into little balls and cover them with a little bit of melted coconut oil. Put on a clean baking tray and let them rest for 30 minutes or so while you work on your paste.
5. Using a plastic bag cut in half, put each pre-cut ball of paste in the middle of it and press with a cutting board or something flat but heavy to make a tortilla-like paste. As you are working on each ball of paste to make your topping for your conchas, start putting them on top of your balls of dough as you work through them. Keep going until each dough ball has its own topping.

6. Score your conchas to any design desired. Make them unique!

7. Put your conchas in the oven for 30 minutes or until golden brown at 350 F.

8. Take out from the oven using a heat-resistant glove and let them cool a little bit.

9. Enjoy your freshly baked conchas with your friends and family with a cup of vegan hot cocoa or coffee.

Photo by Oscar Narváez
CHURROS

by Vegan Mexican Food

For the dough

¼ cup vegetable oil
2 cups water
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups all-purpose flour
Vegetable oil, for deep frying

For the Cinnamon Sugar

¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Combine oil, water, sugar and salt in a large heavy-bottomed pot on the stove.

2. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.

3. Remove from heat.

4. Add flour and stir vigorously with a metal spoon until mixture forms a thick, smooth-textured ball.

5. Then let the mixture cool in the pan until warm, not cool.

6. Transfer dough to a piping bag with a medium-size star tip. Pipe logs three to four inches long onto a sheet pan.

7. Let sheet pan chill in a refrigerator while you prepare the oil.

8. In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the vegetable oil over high heat to 350 degrees (approximately 10 minutes). Alternately, you can use an electric deep fryer, heating the oil to 350 degrees.

9. Deep fry churros until golden (maintaining the temperature) and remove with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels.
10. Prepare cinnamon sugar mixture in a bowl.

11. While warm, toss churros gently in cinnamon sugar mixture to coat.

12. Serve and enjoy!
PINEAPPLE EMPANADAS

by Eddie Garza

FOR THE DOUGH

2 cups unbleached white flour
2 tablespoons evaporated cane sweetener
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
⅓ cup vegetable shortening
½ cup water
1 batch filling, pineapple or pumpkin
(see below)
Agave nectar for assembly

FOR THE PINEAPPLE FILLING

1 8 oz. jar pineapple preserves

FOR THE PUMPKIN FILLING
(courtesy of Crystal Tate)

1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
¾ cup brown sugar
4 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon molasses
1 teaspoon vanilla

FOR THE DOUGH

1. In a large bowl, mix together flour, sweetener, salt, and baking powder.

2. Add vegetable shortening to dry ingredients and use fingers to mix thoroughly until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

3. Add water and knead together.

4. Cover dough and place in refrigerator for 5-10 minutes.
For the Pumpkin Filling

1. In a medium size bowl, mix all ingredients until incorporated.

2. Taste and adjust as needed. It shouldn’t be too wet to scoop into the center of the dough circles.

For the Empanada

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or non-stick silicone baking mat and set aside.

3. On a large, floured surface, roll out the dough and cut circles about 3½ inches in diameter (roughly 12 circles).

4. Place a small spoonful of pineapple preserves (or pumpkin filling) in the center of each circle and lightly dab the edges with agave nectar.

5. Fold the dough over to enclose the filling and seal the edges together by pressing down with a fork.

6. Place the empanadas on the baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes.

7. Remove sheet from oven and glaze empanadas with agave nectar.

8. Set sheet back in oven and broil empanadas until they are golden brown. Approximately 3 minutes.

Photo by Cait Taylor
**MEXICAN HOT CHOCOLATE**

*by Marina Moro*

**Mexican Chocolate Option**

4 cups of water or soy/almond milk  
1 package of Mexican chocolate*

*Make your own chocolate option: when Mexican Chocolate is unavailable and you need to make your own.  
*Courtesy of Kathy Contreras Alcorn*

4 tablespoons cocoa powder, to taste  
1-2 tsp cinnamon (can use less if garnishing with whole cinnamon sticks, also known as canela)  
¼ cup sugar  
½ tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg (optional)  
½ teaspoon ground cloves (optional)  
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, if you want it spicy)

**Garnish**

Cinnamon sticks, whole (optional)

*Check out Food Empowerment Project’s Chocolate List of recommended brands. Ibarra & Taza are two chocolate brands recommended on our chocolate list.*
**Mexican Chocolate Option**

1. In a pot over high heat, bring the water or milk to a boil. Approximately 5-7 minutes.

2. Add the chocolate, stirring frequently, until it dissolves completely. Approximately 3 minutes.


**Make Your Own Chocolate Option**

1. Combine water or milk and spices of choice in a slow cooker.

2. Add cocoa powder, starting with 4 tablespoons of cocoa powder, and increase to taste. Stir until combined.

3. Cook on low for 2 1/2 hours, stirring every 20 min.

4. Serve hot.

*Photo by Julia Goodwin*
PONCHE
by Pedro Hernández

2 sticks whole sugar cane
1 pound tejocote fruit (Mexican hawthorne)
2 red apples
2 pears
4 medium guavas
2 oranges
3 ounces dried hibiscus flowers
1 (8 ounces) piloncillo (Mexican brown sugar)
1 cup sugar or to taste
1½ gallons water
2 cinnamon sticks

1. Chop fruit into large chunks.

2. Boil water with all other ingredients over medium heat until tender (approximately 10 minutes).

3. Sweeten with additional sugar if desired.

4. Serve warm.

Photo by Alexa Janell Photography
GET INVOLVED

Food Empowerment Project is a vegan food justice organization and 501(c)(3) nonprofit that seeks to create a more just and sustainable world by recognizing the power of one’s food choices. We encourage healthy food choices that reflect a more compassionate society by spotlighting the abuse of animals on farms, the depletion of natural resources, unfair working conditions for produce workers, and the unavailability of healthy foods in communities of color and low-income areas.

By making informed choices, we can prevent injustices against animals, people, and the environment. We also work to discourage negligent corporations from pushing unhealthy foods into low-income areas and empower people to make healthier choices by growing their own fruits and vegetables. In all of our work, F.E.P. seeks specifically to empower those with the fewest resources. For more information on the power of your food choices, getting involved in food justice issues or volunteering with us, just get in touch!

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Most of all, thank you to our ancestors, who have given us so much and enabled us to be proud of who we are and where we come from.
Find more recipes at veganmexicanfood.com & foodispower.org