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## Pancakes (and Waffles)

My pancake day is Saturday. I want at least one weekend breakfast to be different from my normal everyday breakfast (which is usually a chocolate grain bowl). It’s also helpful, but not required, to have at least one pancake buddy with which to share the experience and accountability. It helps if you love your pancake buddy(ies). Making pancakes from scratch is a non-trivial effort. It’s not hard, but it’s non-trivial.

Regarding gluten free pancakes: do not attempt. Pancakes are a poor form for gluten free baking. Too many attempts have resulted in wet, mushy, disappointing pancakes. This is the opposite of what Pancake Saturdays are about, which is comfort and joy. It’s a total buzzkill to go to the trouble of making pancakes only to have them ‘fall’ and condense into a mushy mess. A much better gluten free option would be to try any of these flavor combinations as a muffin or a flavored cornbread.

Generally, you can *reduce* the amount of gluten in the dry ingredients, but you’ll want to have about 50% of your flours consist of gluten *full* flours. Gluten helps maintain the structural integrity of the pancake which is of greater significance with vegan pancakes; they contain no eggs which typically function as a binder (and can be eliminated from most recipes simply by proportionally increasing any liquid element).

You’ll see that most if not all the following recipes contain tofu. Tofu itself is a great egg and oil replacer, resulting in some very delicious, compelling, protein centric, low fat pancakes. Do not underestimate the significance of this. Low-fat, vegan diets alone have proven to reduce or eliminate Type 2 diabetes. Please do your own research on this but consider: it’s not hard to understand that layer upon layer of saturated fat within anyone’s circulatory system is not a good thing. Watch enough Netflix documentaries on health and lifestyle and you’ll hear multiple doctors mention this not only in relation to diabetes, but also vascular dementia and Alzeimers. Just sayin’...

Also of significance is that most if not all the following recipes do not contain *any* refined sugar. Yes, they are sweetened with fruit generally and contain all the fiber contained therein. Again, please do your own research on the benefits of reducing one’s sugar intake (low carb). Personally, I can attest that going low carb is on par with its benefits with that of going vegan: improved energy, better complexion, improved sleep, better digestion, fewer (food related) cravings, better mood regulation, etc.

The pancake batter in any of these recipes can be used as is for waffle batter.

## Basic Orange Pancakes

Liquid ingredients:

* 2 cups <alt> milk, i.e., soy, oat, rice, hemp, etc.
* 1 package tofu, preferably soft, but any firmness will do
* Zest and juice from two oranges
* Sweetener (options); all to taste and size/portion:
  + 1 - 3 pears to taste and size
  + Pineapple
  + Apple or applesauce
  + Agave nectar (1 - 4 Tbsp.)
  + Granulated sugar (acceptable but not recommended)
* 1 - 2 tsp salt (to taste)
* 1 tsp flax seed
  + and/or Chia seeds
* 1 - 2 tsp vanilla extract (substitute all or a portion with almond extract as desired)
* 1 - 2 tsp cinnamon (optional / to taste)

Dry ingredients:

* 1 ½ cups flour
* 1 cup almond flour
* ½ cup quick oats
* ½ cup cornmeal
* 1 tsp baking soda
* 1 tsp baking powder

Blend all liquid ingredients in a high speed blender (Vitamix) for 30 to 90 seconds. Taste the blend. Adjust as necessary, i.e., add salt or sweetener or perhaps another spot of vanilla/almond extract. Pre-mix all dry ingredients before adding liquid ingredients. Start pre-heating the griddle. Combine ingredients - wet into dry. Mix until combined. Do not overmix. Use a ½ cup measuring cup to pour batter on to griddle. Cook until bubbles in center break or edges appear dull and cooked.

Makes about a dozen four to five inch pancakes. Enjoy while warm with syrup, powdered sugar, cinnamon sugar, fresh fruit, pepper jelly, or any combination thereof! Refrigerate leftover pancakes. Enjoy them through the rest of the week, reheating them individually in the toaster.

Variations:

* Orange ginger almond: add some fresh ginger (1 - 2 tsp to liquid ingredients) and *sliced* almonds (to dry ingredients)
* Orange blueberry: add approximately 1 cup of fresh or frozen blueberries
* Orange chocolate chunk/chip: add about ½ cup of vegan chocolate chunks or mini-chips
* Orange cranberry: add ½ - 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries

## Orange Blueberry Cornbread Waffles

Liquid ingredients:

* 2 cups <alt> milk, i.e., soy, oat, rice, hemp, etc.
* 1 package tofu, preferably soft, but any firmness will do
* Zest and juice from two oranges
* Sweetener (options); all to taste and size/portion:
  + 1 - 3 pears to taste and size
  + 2 cups of fresh or canned Pineapple
  + 1 - 2 Apples or 1 - 2 cups applesauce (unsweetened)
  + Agave nectar (1 - 4 Tbsp.)
  + Granulated sugar (acceptable but not recommended)
* 1 - 2 tsp salt (to taste)
* 1 tsp flax seed
  + and/or Chia seeds
* 1 - 2 tsp vanilla extract (substitute all or a portion with almond extract as desired)
* 1 tsp cinnamon (optional / to taste)

Dry ingredients:

* 2 cups cornmeal
* 1 cup flour
* 1/2 cup almond flour
* 1 tsp baking soda
* 1 tsp baking powder
* 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Blend all liquid ingredients in a high speed blender (Vitamix) for 30 to 90 seconds. Taste the blend. Adjust as necessary, i.e., add salt or sweetener or perhaps another spot of vanilla/almond extract. Pre-mix all dry ingredients before adding liquid ingredients. Start preheating the waffle iron. Combine ingredients - wet into dry. Mix until combined. Do not overmix. Cook per waffle iron directions and until steam is most done escaping from waffle iron.

Enjoy while warm with syrup, powdered sugar, cinnamon sugar, fresh fruit, pepper jelly, or any combination thereof! Refrigerate leftovers. Enjoy them through the rest of the week, reheating them individually in the toaster.

Variations:

* Orange ginger almond: add some fresh ginger (1 - 2 tsp to liquid ingredients) and *sliced* almonds (to dry ingredients)
* Orange chocolate chunk/chip: substitute ½ cup (or more) of vegan chocolate chunks and/or mini-chips

## Smoothies

Drinking green smoothies should be normalized, which is why I say they should be consumed in public. If/when anyone asks you about why/why you’re drinking such a thing, remember you’re a vegan ambassador. Practice being kind to the uninitiated. Share your vegan journey story if they ask. Thank them for their interest. Ask them if they’d like a taste. Flaunt your radiant, vegan energy. I remember someone saying, “...you don’t know the **power** of the *green* side!”. They may have been a militant vegan though.

Generally, when making a green smoothie, you want a minimum ratio of 2:1 in terms of veg to fruit. Fruit contains about ten times the amount of sugar than any ‘vegetable’. Use that to your advantage. You don’t want a syrupy green smoothie. You want one that is slightly sweet (to taste) and lets the flavor of the vegetables come through.

Don’t miss the opportunity to be creative and thrifty when composing your smoothie. Use fresh ingredients when you can get them, especially if you have your own kitchen garden. Use whatever overripe fruit you may have on hand. Cut off any rotten spots as needed, but salvage whatever you can from the waste stream.

### Greg’s Green Machine

2 cups <alt> milk

1 <fruit>, i.e., pear, apple, pineapple (1 - 2 cups)

1 large carrot, sliced into blendable (1 inch) chunks

½ cucumber, unpeeled and cut into blendable chunks

1 - 2 stalks celery, chopped into blendable chunks

1 tsp flax seed

A fist full of fresh, peeled ginger root chunks (2 - 8 terminal thumb digit sized chunks)

1 - 3 tsp flax seed oil

1 Tbls trace mineral liquid (optional)

1 10 oz. package frozen spinach

1 - 2 scoops of vegan protein powder (optional - can substitute tofu or edamame)

1 325 mg tablet aspirin (optional)

Combine all ingredients in Vitamix (or other high speed blender equivalent). Split between two 28 oz. Blender Bottles. Chug any extra. Top off with water if short at all. Drink the first bottle while fresh. Refrigerate the other for up to 3 - 4 days. After that, it morphs into more of a spinach, ginger kombucha.

Jack your smoothie into the Mac Daddy of all beverages:

* Add any left over green, yellow, or red bell peppers
* Add some fresh jalapeno pepper
* Add a slice of lemon, rind and all
* Experiment with fresh herbs, i.e., Parsley, Basil, Cilantro, Lemon Verbena, Thai Basil, Lemon Grass, etc.
* Add any fresh kale or Swiss Chard you may have on hand, although beware of adding red vegetable(s). It will turn your green smoothie brown.
* Add black pepper, Turmeric, Cinnamon