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INFO SHEET: PLANT- BASED COOKING WITH NO OIL FOR RESTAURANTS*

Restaurant Campaign

With 6% of the U.S. population now identifying as vegan (up from 1% in 2014), and 30% choosing to leave meat off their plates and replace it with plant-based alternatives¹, there is a strong and growing appetite for plant-based menu items. At the same time, there is a growing demand for plant-based menu items that contain no added fat, largely driven by patients of physicians who have read the nutrition science. Offering meals that contain no oil can have enormous positive health benefits, especially for customers struggling with Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. As explained by Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr., M.D., “The reality is that oils are extremely low in terms of nutritive value. They contain no fiber, no minerals and is 100% fat calories. Both the mono unsaturated and saturated fat contained in oils is harmful to the endothelium, the innermost lining of the artery, and that injury is the gateway to vascular disease. It doesn’t matter whether it’s olive oil, corn oil, coconut oil, canola oil, or any other kind.”²

Creating plant-based options that contain no oil for a restaurant’s menu may seem daunting at first, especially to restaurant managers and chefs who have been trained to use salt, sugar, and fat to appeal to the taste preferences of Americans. This Info Sheet has been crafted to help make this adjustment seamlessly and with a particular focus on outcomes that include delicious taste and appetizing appearances.

Oil Substitutes and Tips for Cooking without Oil:

- Dry sauté vegetables using water, vegetable broths, wines, and/or juices as needed. The trick is to use small amounts of liquids, 1-2 tablespoons at a time, to deglaze the pan as necessary. Keep the food moving in the pan by stirring frequently. The process is similar to sautéing with oil. There is no need to use chicken stock or oils in any vegetable soup. Veggie stock works fine.
- Use non-stick pots and pans to prevent sticking and burning, such as a heavy bottomed, stainless steel pan. Be sure to always preheat the pan.
- Roast all vegetables, including veggie burgers, potatoes, tofu, and tempeh, on parchment-lined baking sheets or non-stick silicone mats and ovenware. There are large and inexpensive silicone mats designed for restaurant-style ovens. As an added bonus, these baking sheets and mats make clean-up a breeze.
- Roasted vegetables are tastier than boiled. Consider roasting veggies, even if they will later be blended into a soup.
- Deep frying can be replaced by baking, and it works well with a similar breading technique: dip vegetables into a flour or starch base, then a non-dairy milk, and then coat the veggies with bread crumbs or crushed cornflakes. Place the ‘breaded’ veggies on a silicone-lined baking sheet and bake to achieve a crisp golden brown final product. This process works particularly well for foods like onion rings, veggie ‘crab cakes’ or burgers, eggplant, zucchini, and cauliflower.

1 <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/news/six-percent-of-americans-identify-as-vegan/>

2 <http://www.dresselstyn.com/site/faq/>



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- Most vegetables contain plenty of moisture and won't get overly dried. Nevertheless, to avoid drying or to rehydrate a food, use a steamer or have a spray bottle with water handy, and spray foods before they go in the oven. Also, spraying refrigerated or frozen breads before reheating them in the oven will make them taste like they were freshly baked.
- Use nuts, nut butters, seeds, avocados, beans, and tofu to build creamy dressings and sauces. International food markets, especially Indian stores, often sell broken nuts in bulk at discounted prices. Use additional ingredients, such as vinegars, spices, fruits, mustards, and nutritional yeast flakes, to create unique dressings. A blender with powerful blades and motors (like a Vitamix) is a highly recommended tool. Blending helps to emulsify the natural fats that occur in many plant-based foods. For specific ideas, you can refer to the [PlantPure Nation and the PlantPure Kitchen cookbooks](#) to get recipes for over 30 dressings and sauces.
- Cashew cream and coconut milk (both readily available at most supermarkets) are excellent replacements for dairy cream and butter.
- When baking breads, pizza crusts, and baked goods, try replacing eggs and oils with aquafaba (chickpea/garbanzo bean juice), flax meal/water, applesauce, cornstarch and water, chia meal/water, tapioca, or fruit purees. There are many recipes for breads, pizza crusts, and baked goods in the [PlantPure cookbooks](#).
- Leave out the oils when cooking legumes, pasta, and grains. They are unnecessary. While most people cannot tell when cooking oil has been removed; people who have removed oil from their diets can quickly detect a dish that's been prepared with oil.

Recommended Resources on Oil Free Meal Preparation

- The article Expert Tips on How to Cook Without Oil provides a breakdown of how to sauté, stir-fry, bake, and roast without added fat: <https://www.forksoverknives.com/plant-based-cooking-how-to-cook-without-oil/>
- The 4-minute video, No Oil Saute!, by PlantPure Chef Kim Campbell, reviews tips and tricks for sauteing without oil: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvuqzVwDfRs&feature=em-subsub_digest
- The focus of the [PlantPure Communities culinary philosophy](#) is on eating meals made from whole, plant-based foods without added oils and using minimal salt and sugar. Please refer to the Info Sheet: WFPB Diet Explained for Restaurant Owners/Managers for more information on this topic.

*Attribution: This Info Sheet was generously contributed by PlantPure Chefs Kim Campbell and Fernando Peralta. It has been adjusted in places by PlantPure Communities in order to be meet the needs of the PPC Restaurant Campaign.

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We welcome your suggestions and ideas! Please send them to info@plantpurecommunities.org. This material may not be used out of context. Please refer to PPC's terms and conditions for more information. Updated January 2018.