



Adapting recipes for holiday feasts

The holiday season is upon us, a time for gathering, sharing meals, and creating warm memories with loved ones. But as festive as it is, holiday cooking can feel tricky when accommodating different dietary needs. Whether someone prefers plant-based dishes or avoids grains and gluten, there are countless ways to create delicious, healthy meals that everyone can enjoy.

GLUTEN-FREE? VEGETARIAN? VEGAN?

Cooking for special dietary needs doesn't have to be complicated. There are more and more recipes written with varied dietary needs in mind. And, with a little knowledge, almost any recipe can be converted with the right substitutions.



40%

of all Canadians

eat plant-based

milk products and other plant-based proteins.¹

Protein substitutes

When cooking a recipe that asks for chicken, beef, pork or other meat, consider using:

- Tofu—made from soy milk
- Seitan—a meaty wheat-derived product
- Tempeh – fermented soybeans pressed into a dense patty

Vegetables like portobello mushrooms or cauliflower heads cut into steaks work as well.

Egg substitutes

With cooking and baking, eggs are often used as a binder to hold together what you're making. They also add moisture.

Consider instead:

- Apple sauce or banana—These will keep baked goods moist, but remember, they add sweetness. Substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of unsweetened apple sauce or 1 medium ripe banana for 1 egg.
- Aquafaba—The liquid from a can of chickpeas can be used in sweet or savory dishes in place of eggs. Use 3 tablespoons in place of 1 egg.
- Silken tofu—Great for creamy dishes; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (pureed) equals 1 egg.
- Powdered or liquid egg substitutes—There are many prepared options available, including flax seed and chia seed egg substitutes. Experiment to see which you like best.



Butter and dairy substitutes

Dairy substitutes have been around for many years. These are usually the easiest substitutes to make on a one-for-one basis. Your taste will lead you to a favourite. Consider:

- Vegan butter—Made from vegetable oils or nut or oat milk.
- Milk alternatives—Nuts, coconut, soy, rice, oats or blends of these milks are delicious.
- Vegan yogurts, sour cream and all kinds of cheeses are also readily available.



Gluten-free alternatives

Flour from wheat contains gluten that some people are sensitive to. Luckily, there are many options for substitution, including:

- All-purpose gluten-free flour—Commercially prepared and easy to measure. This substitutes one-for-one.
- Almond flour—Great for baking. It's a little denser than wheat flour.
- Brown rice flour—Lends a slightly nutty flavor.
- Ancient grains—Flour made from buckwheat, sorghum, corn, amaranth and teff are all gluten-free.

Experiment in the kitchen and try different combinations to see which ones you like the best.

WE'VE MADE THE SUBSTITUTIONS FOR YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING RECIPES.

Linzer torte cookies

Makes 24 servings | Prep: 13 minutes

Jam-filled cookies offer a hint of extra sweetness and a pleasing combination of textures.



Gluten-free option:

Substitute 1½ cups of all-purpose gluten-free flour in place of whole wheat flour.

Vegan option:

Substitute ½ cup of vegan butter for regular butter. Replace the egg with an egg substitute.

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- ¾ cup whole almonds
- 2 Tbsp plus ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup unsalted light butter, softened
- 1½ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp almond extract
- ¼ cup turbinado sugar (for texture)
- 3 Tbsp raspberry jam

Preparation

1. Arrange two oven racks evenly spaced in the upper and lower third of oven. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat two large baking sheets with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place almonds and 2 tablespoons brown sugar in a food processor. Process until the nuts are finely ground, about 40 seconds. Add flour, baking powder and salt and pulse to combine.
3. Beat butter in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Add the remaining ½ cup brown sugar and beat until combined. Scrape sides, add egg, vanilla and almond extract and beat until completely incorporated.
4. Add flour mixture and mix until dough forms. Roll dough into 24 balls.
5. Roll balls in turbinado sugar and place on the prepared baking sheets, spacing evenly. Press gently down in the center with thumb or finger to create a slight indent.
6. Whisk jam in a medium bowl until smooth. Using a teaspoon, fill indents with jam.
7. Bake for 12-13 minutes, or until the cookies are just lightly golden.

Nutrition information (as originally written) | Serving Size: 1 cookie



Calories: 97 | Total fat: 5 g | Saturated fat: 1 g | Sodium: 83 mg | Cholesterol: 13 mg
Total carbs: 14 g | Fibre: 1 g | Sugars: 7 g | Protein: 2 g | Potassium: 21 mg

Sheet pan lemon pepper chicken

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 25 mins

Lemon pepper brings just enough tangy and spicy flavours to make it interesting. Pair it with jasmine or basmati rice for a naturally gluten-free meal.



Vegan option:

Substitute one pound of extra firm tofu in place of the chicken breasts. Pat the tofu dry and break it into bite-sized chunks. Add 1 Tbsp of cornstarch to the seasoning mix (it will help absorb the extra moisture). Prepare as you would with chicken until golden and crispy.

Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 Tbsp lemon pepper seasoning
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- 1 large lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- 1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed and halved
- 1 medium red onion, sliced into strips or small chunks
- 2 to 3 Tbsp olive oil
- Fresh parsley, optional for garnishing

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil. Evenly drizzle olive oil on foil.
2. In a large bowl or zipper bag, mix lemon pepper and salt. Add chicken chunks and toss to evenly coat. Arrange chicken on baking sheet. Cook for 10 minutes.
3. Remove sheet pan from oven and flip the chicken pieces. Arrange the lemon slices, green beans and onions. Drizzle with olive oil and season with lemon pepper seasoning. Bake for another 15 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and vegetables have some golden color.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with fresh parsley. Serve with the rice of your choice.

Nutrition information (as originally written) | Per serving



Calories: 279 | Total fat: 14 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 707 mg | Cholesterol: 82 mg
Total carbs: 11 g | Fibre: 4 g | Sugars: 0 g | Protein: 27 g | Potassium: 668 mg



Time: a precious resource

We all start each day with the same amount of time.

Some days fly by and others drag on with every passing second. And then you wake up one morning and it's a new season, the end of a school year or holiday time again. How does that happen so quickly?

We know time is passing because we see changes. The sun rises and sets. You complete work, meetings and commutes. Children grow. Your life is not the same today as it was yesterday.

Is it possible to be more conscious of time passing? To make the seconds, minutes and hours count more? **Yes, with practice.**





The precious present

Think about it—have you noticed how much of our lives we spend thinking about the past or worrying about the future? It's rare, in our busy lives, to pay attention to the present.

Time is passing right now, at this moment, as you read this. By tuning your mind to the experience of time passing through you in the present moment, you cultivate mindfulness.

Be in the now

Take one minute to be in the present.

- Get into a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Simply feel this moment. Experience what the present feels like.
- Notice what you feel. Notice the sensation of time.
- Try not think about what just happened or what is coming up next.
- If your mind drifts to a memory or a thought about the future, bring it back to the present.



Apply it to your day

Mindfulness is about becoming aware and staying tuned to the present moment. It's about noticing. It's looking at what is happening to you, around you or inside you in the moment.

As you practice focusing on the now, you will become more aware and able to appreciate every moment, effectively slowing down time.





Volunteering

GIVE THE GIFT OF YOUR TIME

Everyone knows volunteering is important. Sharing your time and physical and mental energy allows you to:

- Give back to your community
- Help those who are in need
- Work for a greater good

Give to receive¹

In exchange for making these contributions, you get many benefits from volunteering. Mentally and emotionally, volunteers experience:

- Lower levels of loneliness
- Higher self-esteem
- Higher life satisfaction
- Greater happiness
- Greater sense of meaning in life



**24 million
Canadians
volunteer each year.²**

Plus, volunteering allows you to connect with people and build social networks outside of your regular friend groups. Things like reading to young children or packing boxes at a food pantry help volunteers benefit physically from helping others. These activities keep you moving and thinking at the same time. This helps reduce your stress levels and increases positive feelings by releasing dopamine.

Where to start

We've all heard the phrase, when you love what you're doing, it's not work. The same goes for volunteering. People volunteer for many different reasons. Perhaps you're exploring a career change, sharpening your skills or interested in meeting new people. Many companies have partnerships that offer opportunities (and time) to volunteer.

Check in with:

- Local places of worship
- Community centers
- Schools
- Hospitals and nursing homes
- Parks and gardens



Make it a family activity

Teaching children and teens about giving back can be an important life lesson.

Start a tradition

Work volunteering into your annual calendar. Perhaps you wrap gifts for families in need or children in foster care, or serve holiday meals at a soup kitchen or church.

Tap into your passion

Take something that gives you joy and find a way to incorporate it into your volunteering. If you love to cook, consider spending time at a soup kitchen or with a local meals-on-wheels program. If you love dogs or cats, perhaps volunteer at an animal shelter or rescue organization.

People who volunteer more than 100 hours annually:

- Experience reduced depression and boredom
- Function better physically
- Have a longer life expectancy

That's just two hours each week!

**Volunteering keeps you active and engaged.
The benefits are felt by you and your community.**

¹<https://madeinca.ca/volunteer-work-statistics-canada/>

²<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/825-national-volunteer-week>

Contact Us Today

If you're dealing with medical uncertainty of any kind,
Teladoc Health can help.

Visit [Teladoc.ca/medical-experts](https://www.teladoc.ca/medical-experts)
or call 1-877-419-2378



This newsletter is not meant to provide medical advice or service and should not be construed as the professional advice of Teladoc Health. As such, Teladoc Health does not guarantee or assume responsibility for the correctness of the information or its applicability regarding any specific factual situation. Personal health problems should be brought to the attention of physicians and appropriate health care professionals.

©Teladoc Health, Inc. All rights reserved.