THE COMFORTING CHICKENLESS COOKBOOK

Six sensational plant-based recipes from our friends, for you
FOR MANY OF US, WHEN WE THINK OF THE COMFORT FOOD OF OUR CHILDHOODS,

chicken comes to mind. Chicken nuggets snatched up from a slow-moving drive-thru, devoured on the way home. Fried chicken, biscuits, mac-and-cheese, and collard greens piled high onto a plate at a family get-together. A steaming bowl of chicken noodle soup, believed to possess restorative powers, each spoonful carefully cooled before being gulped.

The problem, of course, is that there’s nothing comforting about the chicken industry. These cuddly, talkative, and smart birds are bred to grow at an unnaturally rapid rate, to a freakish, unhealthy size. They’re denied every natural behavior and every inch of personal space they need. Not to mention, chicken farms pollute our air, contaminate our water, and threaten our planet’s biodiversity. The list of reasons to leave these intelligent animals off our plates goes on and on.

Thankfully, you don’t have to choose between comfort food and a compassionate meal. With the six recipes in this little cookbook, you can nourish yourself with nostalgia without compromising on ethics—or taste. Meatless fried chicken (two different ways), chickenless tikka masala, jackfruit chimichurri pizza, barbecue jackfruit sandwiches, and of course, tofu “chicken” noodle soup that will actually feed your soul. All the deliciousness and richness of your favorites, with none of the guilt.

What’s more comforting than that?
The night before you prepare your soup, start by preparing your tofu. Wrap it in a kitchen towel, then press it by laying a heavy object on top and allowing it to sit for at least 30 minutes to remove excess liquid. You can use a heavy book, or a tofu press if you have one. Slice into small cubes once pressed and freeze overnight. This will create a nice texture to the tofu. Remove from freezer and allow to thaw for 30 minutes when you’re ready to prepare your broth.

Cook pasta according to package, strain, and set aside before you prepare your broth.

In a large pot over medium heat, sauté onions with a touch of oil or veggie broth until translucent and fragrant. Add garlic, herbs, poultry seasoning, garlic powder, and onion powder, and cook for about 1 minute. Next add gluten-free soy sauce and thawed tofu cubes, and cook for 1-2 minutes.

Add sliced celery and carrots to the pot, and toss for an additional 1-2 minutes. Then add broth to the pot, and bring to a boil over high heat. Cover and let simmer for 10-15 minutes, or until carrots are fork tender. The more you let simmer, the more flavorful the broth will become. Taste, and add additional seasoning or salt and pepper as desired.

When ready to serve, add cooked pasta, and chopped fresh parsley, cooking on medium heat for about a minute or so. Enjoy!
MALINDA SIMPSON’S VEGETARIAN FRIED CHICK’N

Malinda Simpson, a Dallas-based foodie and lawyer, relishes cooking up compassionate comfort food that shows “vegans and non-vegans alike that vegan food is more than just salads.” With her vegan fried chick’n, that mission is fully fulfilled. Made with antioxidant-rich oyster mushrooms, flour, non-dairy milk, and an invigorating dose of spices, and served with hot sauce or vegan aioli, these crunchy creations will win over every member of your family—omnivores, flexitarians, and vegans alike.

1. Clean oyster mushrooms with a damp towel, and pat dry. Break into small clusters.
2. In a deep pan, add enough oil to cover the oyster mushrooms. Then, heat vegetable oil to about 360° F.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together wet batter ingredients.
4. In a second large bowl, mix together dry mix ingredients.
5. Dip mushrooms in wet batter and then dry mix one by one with tongs (wipe tongs with cloth if batter accumulates on tongs).
6. Place mushrooms in oil, and cook for about 4-5 minutes until golden brown. Drain on paper towel-lined plate. Serve with hot sauce or vegan aioli (vegan mayo with hot sauce).

½ pound oyster mushrooms
Vegetable or canola oil
(for deep frying)

WET BATTER
1 ¾ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk
(I use soy milk)
1 ½ tablespoon seasoning salt

DRY MIX
1 ¾ cup rice flour or tapioca flour
2 teaspoon paprika or smoked paprika
¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon onion powder
2 teaspoon chickenless seasoning
(optional, but recommended; add 1 teaspoon salt if not using)
To make the chickenless chicken (pakoras)

With a mixer, combine the chickpea flour, salt, and ajwain seeds (if using) together. While you can do this by hand, using a mixer will ultimately give you a smoother and slightly frothy consistency that is ideal.

While the mixer is running, slowly add water (between ¾-1 cup) until the batter is smooth and slightly runny, without lumps. Mix for a few minutes until the batter becomes a bit lighter in color.

Add onion, turmeric powder, a small handful of cilantro leaves, and the baking powder. Mix for a few seconds until fully mixed into the batter.

Now, you have a few options. Either scoop the batter into a mini muffin tin, and bake for about 13 minutes at 350°. Once they are done, and slightly cooled, you can pop them into an airfryer for about five minutes, if you have one, to give them a slightly crispy exterior. Or, you could drop the batter into hot oil and create a more traditional fried pakora. (To note, I like to bake and air fry these.)

Bringing it all together

Once the ‘chickenless chicken’ has set, add it to your creamy base, and let it sit so the flavors can merge. If the complete dish becomes too thick, you can always add hot water and stir, to reach your desired consistency. (If you’re able to make this dish in advance, you can refrigerate it until you are ready to serve it.)

When you’re ready to serve, reheat in the pan, garnish with cilantro, and serve alongside basmati rice and/or naan, or a flatbread of your choice.

Enjoy!!

Contrary to popular belief, going vegan doesn’t mean a lifetime free of creamy concoctions. Far from it. For proof, look no further than Jennifer Barckley’s spin on chicken tikka masala—created in collaboration with her partner, who grew up with the original recipe in India. It’s every bit as delicious and rich as you would hope. A plethora of spices (ginger, garlic, cinnamon, and mace, to name a few) and enlivening fried chickpea pakoras, will make you realize how much you don’t miss the meat. While this dish needs a bit of time atop your stove, you know what they say—good things come to those who wait!
Pre-heat oven and pizza stone/pizza steel to 500° F.

1. Blend avocado oil, olive oil, red wine vinegar, chopped parsley, red peppers, garlic cloves, dried oregano, cream cheese, vegan mayo salt, and pepper. Set to the side.

2. Roll out pizza dough.

3. Add a layer of chimichurri sauce to the entire pizza dough.

4. Top the pizza dough with onions, spinach, cooked jack fruit, black olives, and mozzarella cheese.

5. Bake in the oven for 8-12 minutes at 450° F or until the pizza is brown. I use a pizza steel.

6. Add more chimichurri sauce to the top of the pizza, and enjoy. I highly recommend dipping your pizza crust in the sauce!
Makes 8 small biscuit sandwiches

1. Place the chips into a ziplock bag, and smash into pieces using a rolling pin, then pour into a bowl and set aside.

2. Pour oil into a deep pot, and place over medium low heat.

3. Mix all the beer batter ingredients in a bowl until combined using a wooden spoon.

4. Grab your oyster mushroom clusters, and coat well in the batter, then dunk in the chip coating.

5. Fry for about 2-3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown on both sides. Then transfer each one to a plate lined with paper towels.

6. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.

For the assembly

Simply cut the tops off of the biscuits (recipe next page), place the crispy fried beer battered oyster mushrooms, then add stone ground mustard and a sliced pickle.

Craving a chicken sandwich, without the cruelty? Alexa Soto is your new favorite friend. She’s created this mouth-watering sandwich—layered with meaty oyster mushrooms, pickles, and stone ground mustard, all nestled between the most buttery biscuit you can imagine. (And yes, they are dairy-free, too.) Just be sure to set one aside for yourself before sharing with others, as they tend to vanish just as quickly as they’re made.

Biscuit recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F. In a bowl, add the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and mix. Cut ½ cup of cold vegan butter into small cubes... I like using vegan butter sticks. Add the cubed vegan butter to the flour, and toss with your hands quickly until it becomes wet sand texture.

2. In a bowl combine the almond milk and 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar or lemon juice. Mix then let sit for 5 minutes. Create a well in the center of the flour mixture, then pour in the almond milk mixture and beer, and mix until combined. Mix the dough with a wooden spoon until there are not dry bits of flour... don’t over mix. Scoop 8 biscuits onto a sheet lined with parchment paper.

3. Melt 2 tablespoons vegan butter... brush the tops with melted vegan butter. Bake for 20 minutes or until medium golden brown on top.
**@chefcamillosabella**

**Camillo Sabella’s BBQ Jackfruit Sandwiches**

Brooklyn’s own Camillo Sabella has over 30 years of experience as a chef and baker in New York City’s premier restaurants and hotels (plus a stint on the Food Network’s “Chopped”). So it’s no surprise that his plant-based barbecue sandwiches are Michelin-quality—packed with tangy-flavored jackfruit, slathered with sriracha mayo, and served with maple slaw and dill pickle chips. After scarfing down a sandwich (or two), you’ll never think of the humble jackfruit the same again.

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**Maple Slaw**

1. In a medium size bowl, add mayonnaise, dijon mustard, and pure maple syrup. Mix well using a whisk.
2. Add coleslaw. Mix well using a spoon or rubber spatula. Add salt & pepper to taste.
3. Cover and refrigerate until you’re ready to build the sandwiches.

**Sriracha Mayo**

1. Place all ingredients in a medium size bowl. Whisk ingredients together until fully incorporated.
2. Cover and refrigerate until you’re ready to build the sandwiches.

**BBQ Jackfruit**

1. Rinse, drain, and thoroughly dry jackfruit.
2. In a small bowl, add brown sugar, paprika, garlic powder, salt, ground black pepper, chili powder, and ground cumin. Mix well and set aside.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add olive oil and jackfruit. Cook for 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally using a wooden spoon. The goal is to soften, break-up, and lightly brown the jackfruit.
4. Add red onion. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add the seasoning from the small bowl. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Add apple cider vinegar and BBQ sauce. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Remove from heat. Place mixture into an ovenproof baking dish. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven. If you like, add more BBQ sauce to the mixture and stir.

**To build the sandwiches**

Cut buns or rolls in half, and warm them in the oven. Remove from the oven. Spoon BBQ jackfruit on the bottom half of the bun or roll. Add the Maple Slaw and 4-6 dill pickle chips. Spread the Sriracha Mayo on the top half of the bun or roll, and place on top of the prepared bottom halves.

Serve, and enjoy!
THANK YOU

for choosing to leave me off your plate

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