

## Egg Alternatives

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Eggs are highly nutritious, versatile and delicious. But, what if eggs aren't an option?

For some, eggs are off limits due to dietary preferences, restrictions or allergies. Or, sometimes, you just cracked your last one and are simply out. And, although relatively low in cost, the price of eggs can rise due to various reasons, including egg shortages caused by a bird flu virus outbreak. In any case, consider integrating egg alternatives as staples in your kitchen.

## Egg Alternatives: The Basics

Whether following a vegan eating plan or swapping out eggs as you prepare a new cuisine, reach for egg alternatives in cooking and baking. The alternative you use will depend on the desired function of the egg in that particular recipe. Eggs in recipes for baked goods are used for functions such as binding, leavening and adding moistness and richness, while their use in savory dishes is more straightforward. Egg alternatives range from chia gel to tofu, in addition to mixes that make egg replacement easy and effective. For instance, one mix is made from chia seeds and garbanzo beans, in which 1 tablespoon combined with 2 tablespoons water provides the equivalent of one egg for use as a binder in recipes, including those for cookies or pancakes. Follow package instructions for best results.

## How to Use Egg Alternatives

Here are some top picks for naturally replacing eggs in recipes. One large egg is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup. Keep this measurement in mind as a guide during cooking and baking.

- **Scrambled egg option:** In place of each large egg, cube 3 ounces firm tofu. Sauté while slightly smashing the tofu when preparing to achieve the look of scrambled eggs. Add a pinch of turmeric for an egg-like yellow color. Sprinkle with an optional pinch of nutritional yeast for a pop of flavor.
- **Boiled egg option:** To mimic the protein and texture of hard-boiled eggs in salads and sandwiches, dice extra-firm tofu (3 ounces tofu for each boiled egg you're replacing) and use as you would chopped hard-boiled eggs. Ready-to-eat baked tofu and white beans are other great options.
- **Binding in baking:** When chia seeds are stirred into water, juice or other liquid, the mixture becomes a recipe-ready gel, which acts as a binder and holds all ingredients together in a baked item. Try this standard version as a large egg equivalent: Mix 1 tablespoon chia seeds with 3 tablespoons water; let stand for 20 minutes. Prefer flaxseeds? Use a mixture of 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds and 3 tablespoons water, and let rest for at least 15 minutes to activate and mimic an egg. Prefer nuts? Try 3 tablespoons of any nut butter in place of a large egg.
- **Leavening in baking:** When you need a baked good to rise, make chia or flaxseed gel as indicated above, then add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder along with the chia gel to the batter. Multiply based on number of eggs in the original recipe. Powdered egg replacers are also very popular and easy to use — simply follow the manufacturer's instructions and mix the powder with water.
- **Moistness and richness in baking:** Whether your recipe is sweet or savory, these egg alternatives are versatile in baking and provide a winning combination of moistness and richness: mashed banana, applesauce, pureed avocado, garbanzo beans or silken tofu. Use  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of any of these plant-based ingredients to replace one large egg.
- **High-quality protein source:** If you're simply looking for a high-quality protein source in your diet in place of eggs, plain yogurt is an easy pick. Just  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt has the same amount of protein as one large egg.

The list of egg alternatives in cooking and baking is nearly limitless. When foregoing eggs, experiment with various fruits and vegetables that you have on hand, such as prune puree, apple butter, pumpkin puree and mashed potatoes or sweet potatoes — which are especially ideal for providing moistness while boosting plant-based nutrients. If leavening is needed, also add ½ teaspoon baking powder for each egg being replaced.

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