

GAUNTLET COOKING



Contents

Beginning your culinary journey	3
Cooking with alcohol	4
Cultured food for the soul	5
Surviving university on a vegan diet	6
Chili, sans ground beef	6
Racing for a delicious energy bar	7
Gotta have my crème brulée	7
Questionable quinoa	8
Chicken about chickpeas	8

A note from your editor

WHEN I FIRST STARTED UNIVERSITY many years ago, I was lucky enough to live at home and mooch home cooking off of my mother. My meager job would allow me to buy lunch everyday — a very expensive decision on my part. Fast forward four years later and I've had to make the choice of spending money on either MacHall lunches or on refilling my gas tank. I rarely make it home in time for those home-cooked meals anymore. In order to satiate my hunger while maintaining a student budget, I grudgingly learned to cook.

Many of you are in the same boat. Unfortunately, many students come to university not knowing how to cook — the only meager skills I had were salvaged from what I remembered of my middle school's home economics class. This supplement hopes to help you along by introducing you to some of the basics — and not so basic — skills behind cooking.

Complete with everything from different ways of working with food in the kitchen to recipe reviews covering different dietary restrictions, I hope this supplement helps get you on your way to culinary savviness.*

— Sarah Dorchak

Contributors

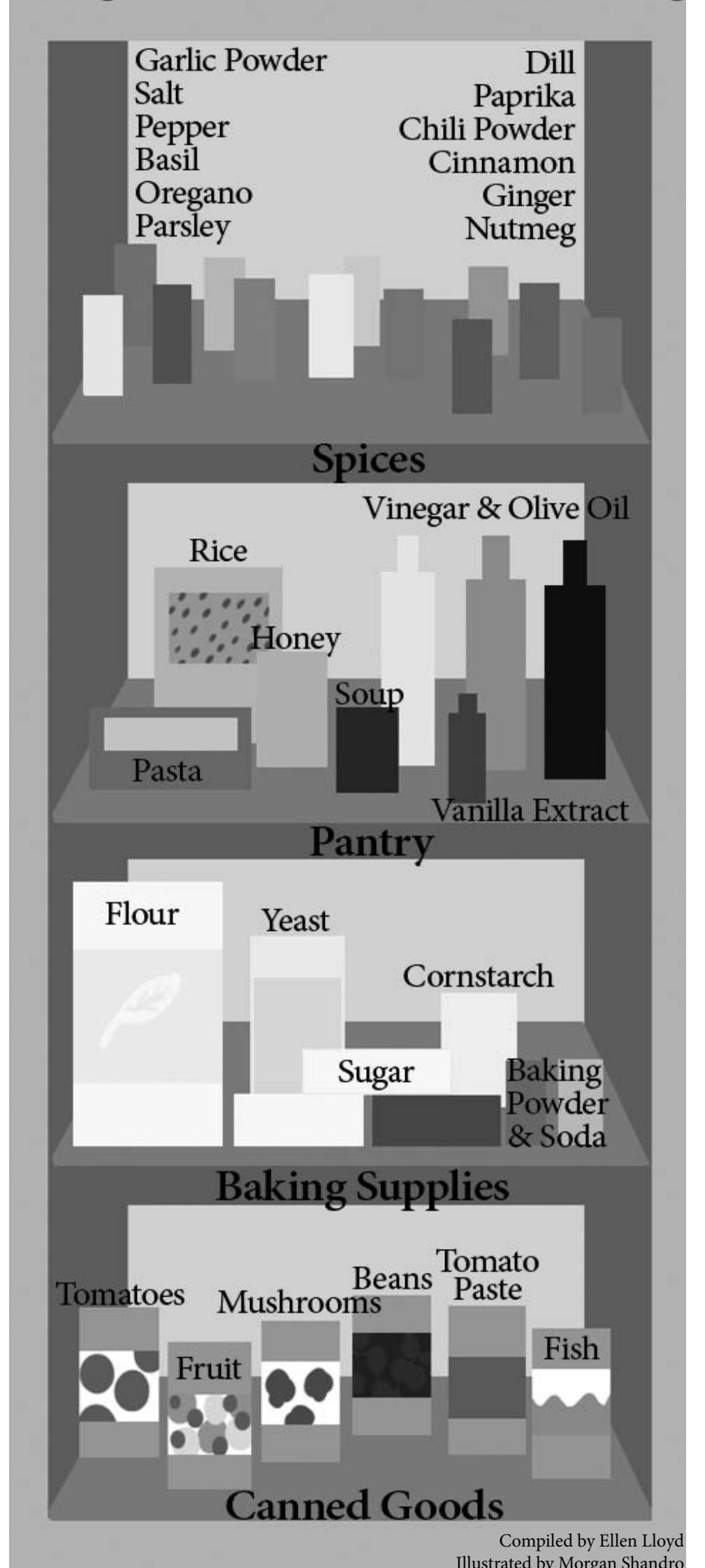
Pauline Anunciacion	Katrina Power
Tamara Cottle	Keisha Russell
Emily Edwards	Allison Seto
Leif Halvorsen	Morgan Shandro
Ellen Lloyd	Julia Shaw
Emily Macphail	Erin Shumlich
Lidia Mah	Remi Watts
Marisa Makin	Max Wensel

* Results may vary

Cover design by Sarah Dorchak and Remi Watts

Cover photograph by Allison Seto

A Beginner's Guide to Shelf-Stocking



Compiled by Ellen Lloyd
Illustrated by Morgan Shandro

Beginning your culinary journey

One small step towards the kitchen, one giant leap closer to becoming Chef Ramsay

Max Wensel

HAVING SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED the first four months of the school year, students at the University of Calgary, have for the most part, demonstrated their merit within the fields of academia, athletics and extracurriculars. We have integrated ourselves fully into the college lifestyle and find ourselves consumed with our studies, work and occasional parties. If there is one unfortunate bias that holds true of students, however, it is invariably that of the lazy and incompetent cook.

To learn basic cooking, all that is truly required are a few fundamental skills, proper equipment and a decent investment of time. Contrary to what many cooking programs lead one to believe, all of this can be done reasonably inexpensively. The first step is to acquire a few critical tools of the trade, namely a set of knives, a few pots and pans and access to an oven and stovetop.

There are three knives that a cook will use on a regular basis, all of which can be acquired for under \$100. The first and most important of these knives is the chef's knife. It should be at least eight inches in length (knives in a block set tend to come in just under this), well-balanced, sharp and with an easily gripped handle. This is the knife that will be used most extensively for prep work and is essential for chopping fruits, vegetables and herbs, and serves for any general slicing that needs to be done. The second is a paring knife, which

should have a fine blade between three to five inches in length. This is used for more delicate work, such as peeling, coring and slicing. Finally, a long serrated knife is ideal for cutting breads, tomatoes and citrus fruits. A good, cheap name in the business is Forschner, but if you want to spend a little more Wusthof is great.

To buy pots and pans, simply make sure they have a thick bottom (thinner ones will heat up very quickly and burn), and are made from quality material. An ideal set to start with would include two frying pans (one large, one small), a large pot for stews and stocks, a standard one for everyday cooking and a smaller one for sauces and other preparations needing lesser quantities.

Once you've acquired the essential cookware, it's time to try your hand at some actual cooking. In all honesty, the best way to start out is to look up a few recipes and give them a shot. One of the best resources available is the Epicurious app, which is free to download. It allows you to enter a few main ingredients and finds a recipe incorporating those, complete with customer reviews and an overall difficulty score. Find whatever's left in your fridge and enter it into the search bar, or go to your local grocer and find an intriguing new ingredient to experiment with. It's always exciting to work with new things and, more often than not, things turn out well even when you're going in figuratively blind. If you end up in trouble at any step of a recipe or technique, or if you're looking to modify or invent, the



internet is a fantastic resource. Ours is the first generation to have this at our hands and there are tons of great demonstrations online, from proper chopping technique to a hands-on demonstration of the creation of béarnaise.

With all this in mind, it is important to remember that quality ingredients are far more essential than great cookware and make almost as much of a difference as the cook. That said, it is not always economically or logistically feasible to acquire every item a recipe calls for. Things that really should not be substituted are base ingredients, such as butter or fresh lemon. Fresh herbs also make a huge difference if present in an unaltered form in the end product — if they are being cooked in the dish it is acceptable to use a dried form. While the difference between fresh and dried herbs is quite noticeable, you can often switch between different varieties of herbs very successfully. A fantastic resource to use for this is a herb interchange charts readily available through a Google search. It will give you an idea of which herbs produce similar flavours and are great when you can't find a rare ingredient.

To find high quality meat and seafood around Calgary, you barely need to leave

campus. Bon Ton meat market and Billingsgate Fish Co. both exist in the same complex as the Keg and Moose McGuire's on the TransCanada highway and Uxbridge Drive, and both provide great ingredients, though the quality makes it more expensive. While looking at any red meat, try to find a piece with above-average marbling, meaning the white lines of fat throughout the muscle should be abundant yet in no one area too highly concentrated. It is the distribution of fat that for the most part gives steak its trademark taste. If you aren't too experienced, a good butcher should be able to give you a hand selecting your piece. When buying shellfish or other seafood, fresh is always best. You should have no reservations about asking the vendor when these came in, or their advice on what is a particularly good buy at the moment. Most white fish can be substituted, and many shellfish follow the same rules, with halibut and oysters as two exceptions.

Finally, take all of the suggestions outlined prior to this with a grain of salt. It is not critical to have the perfect set of cookware or ingredients, or to use fresh herbs over dried. Cooking is at its heart an individual endeavour and thinking on the fly is not only tolerated but encouraged. Adding your own flair to a dish or creating something delicious from a sparse and uninspired list of ingredients is immensely rewarding — seeing progress in your own skill set over time is equally so. If you put the effort, time, cuts and burns in, you'll end up with great dishes and skills.



Above: It doesn't take a professional to create great meals. Photo courtesy Allison Seto.

Left: Buying a collection of knives ensures you have quality in preparing meals. Photo Pauline Anunciacion/the Gauntlet.

Cooking with alcohol

Lidia Mah

HAROLD MCGEE EXPLAINS IN HIS BOOK *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen* that alcohol plays an important role in enhancing the aromas and flavours of a dish. As one of the most authoritative guides on food, McGee writes, “[alcohol’s] chemical compatibility with other aroma compounds means that concentrated alcohol tends to bind aromas in foods and drinks and inhibit their release into the air. But at very low concentrations, around one per cent or less, alcohol actually enhances the release of fruity esters and other aroma molecules.” Indicating that only a small portion of alcohol is required to accentuate or transform the flavours of a dish, McGee states, “wine, vodka and other alcohols are valuable ingredients in general cooking, provided that the portion is small or the alcohol mostly removed by long cooking.”

Although the cooking process reduces alcohol content, alcohol does not cook off completely. “Experiments have shown that long-simmered stews retain about five per cent of the alcohol initially added, briefly cooked dishes from 10 to 50 per cent, and flambés as much as 75 per cent,” McGee adds. However, by subjecting alcohol to higher temperatures and for a longer period of time, McGee notes that cooks can rid alcohol of its harsher tastes. “Alcohol has its own pungent, slightly medicinal qualities, and these qualities are heightened and can become harsh in hot foods. Cooks may therefore simmer or boil sauces for some time to evaporate off as much alcohol as possible.”

BEERS

Having experimented with beers in many different ways, founder of Start From Scratch and contributing writer for Food Network Dan Clapson preaches, “It’s important to have fun with what you cook with.” In addition to making beer risotto and beer-based caramel sauce, he has made a beer and nut cake. “Beer has a caramelly flavour that would be good in a dessert — like when you’re making cake, muffins, or cupcakes,” he said. This year, Clapson’s using some new recipes for his cooking class. As my photographer and I munched, sniffed and sipped several of them in his class, we learned about food and beer pairings from Kirk Bodnar, Charcut’s beer steward and author of *Beers ’n’ Such*.

When used as an ingredient in food, the different styles of beer can dramatically alter the taste of a dish. Light beers are not overly bitter and won’t overpower the other flavours, Bodner remarked. “Lighter beers let the ingredients in the dish shine through. But if you want to do something where beer is a major ingredient, then I would go with something more favourable . . . more roasted,” he added.

Although various grains in beers contribute different flavours, Bodner suggested that the different tastes of beer “has a lot more to do with the malting process — that’s where a lot of the flavour comes from.” He explained that lighter beers made from grains don’t offer as strong a flavour, while darker and more bitter beers can give stronger or even citrus flavours. While passing around a bottle of Tankhouse, he remarked that despite “the chocolatey flavour that you are getting, there is not actual chocolate in it. It comes from the roasting of the malt.”

Bodner loves to slow cook and enjoys braising his food with beer. “Especially with any grill meat, beer is just amazing — wine is as well. But with a nice brown ale, you have the caramelization of the malt matching the caramelizing process of the meat.”

“Where beer really shines is with dessert,” he said. When pairing chocolate stouts or porters he suggested “either layer[ing] the chocolate flavours or the chocolate dessert, or do a kind of counterpoint, like a bittersweet kind of thing with a fruit dessert.”

WINES

A wide range of wines can be used as a primary ingredient, complementing and contrasting the flavours in sauces, risottos and meats. Made from grapes or fruits, they are superb with recipes that have a fruity and sweet taste. “A glass of wine sometimes taste like raspberries, blackberries or currants, so [a dish] that has berries in it might be more appropriate,” said Dan Clapson. “Sometimes people like to put alcohol in a soup or any sort of dish as an after effect,” he added.

Commonly used in fruit or dessert preparations, the sweetness of fortified wines like port and sherry can be used in baking fruit cakes and Christmas cakes.

Michael Ruhlman says in *The Elements of Cooking: Translating the Chef’s Craft for Every Kitchen* that wine can be used for more than desserts. Wines can braise meats like chicken and beef, and are often applied as a marinade. As a marinade, it can break the fibres down in meat. Ruhlman explains: “Alcohol does not tenderize meat but in a matter of speaking ‘cooks’ the exterior of the meat by denaturing (changing the shape of) the protein on the surface of the meat.” When protein denatures through heat in a medium rare or well-done steak, pairing the same wine with them will produce different tastes, Ruhlman added.

The deep ruby colour of wine can even visually enhance a dish. Clapson explained that “a neat thing about red wines is that they can colour your food. Devilled eggs are coming back, so you can toss some red wine with your egg yolks.” When asked about other recipes that we could try, he suggested wine-poached pears. “Steep some wine so that it’s simmering in a pot with a whole bunch of spices, then skin pears and put them in to get a really deep red colour,” he said.



A chef tosses shrimp and white wine together in a pan.

Photo courtesy Allison Sato

DISTILLED SPIRITS

Liquors are alcohols like brandy, whiskey and vodka, whereas distilled alcohol with the added flavouring of spices, nuts and fruits are called liqueurs. Liqueurs like Grand Marnier are used in desserts like Crêpe Suzette. Liqueurs and liquors are flavourful and aromatic, and they have a high alcohol content that makes them terrible for freezing but ideal for showy flambé.

Not all liqueurs or liquors are appropriate for flambé: ones that are 40 per cent alcohol by volume are recommended. When flambéing at home be extremely cautious! According to Jacinthe Koddó, Start from Scratch’s cooking with alcohol instructor, be sure to turn down the stove before adding alcohol, and slightly tilt the pan away to avoid singeing eyebrows. While flambé can be the final touch of a meal, a shot of liquor can be the perfect finishing ingredient.

Of course, a novice cook should be cautious when first trying to flambé. With many resources at hand, like cook books available at the public library or cooking classes at the local YMCA, many beginners can become experienced enough to handle cooking with alcohol.

Cultured food for the soul

How bacteria can be both an ally and a friend in the kitchen

Tamara Cottle

WE LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY sterile world where irradiation, antibiotics and pasteurization are widely used. We have waged war on the tiny microorganisms that proliferate our environment, yet we continue to fall short against these ancient living beings. Many of the bugs wreaking havoc on our health are opportunistic, taking advantage of our aseptic internal and external ecology, to flourish with little competition.

The advent of the war on bacteria coincides with the inception of the industrial revolution and the commodification of food and agriculture. Most people no longer live on farms and instead must obtain their food from grocery stores where shelf stability is more important than viability. A jar of sauerkraut might explode if it is not pasteurized and robbed of its beneficial bacteria.

Many of the foods our ancestors depended on were these very organisms that we now shun. Cultured foods were a staple of many cultures and were a primary source of health and nutrition throughout the ages. Sourdough bread, miso, tempeh, mead and vegetable krauts were slow foods made at home, not in a factory. They took time to prepare, yet people took the time because the payoff was worth it.

Today, our time is monopolized by work. We lower our nutritional standards in exchange for convenience.

The natural foods movement has spawned the resurgence of traditional cultured foods, bringing them back in vogue for the 21st century. In these circles, making your own kefir is the cool thing to do. Popular health gurus defy the old, stinky stereotypes of cultured foods, giving them a new and contemporary sheen. These health experts assert that not only are fermented foods good for our health, they can provide a platform for political and social activism.

“Food offers us many opportunities to resist the culture of mass marketing and commodification,” writes Sandor Ellix Katz in his book *Wild Fermentation, the Flavor, Nutrition and Craft of Live-Culture Foods*. Katz emphasizes the need to work in harmony with these microbial cultures rather than dominating or eradicating them.

In fact, these microorganisms have many health benefits to the human body. According to Sally Fallon, author of *Nourishing Traditions*, the lactobacilli bacteria in fermented vegetables and fruit improves their nutritional value and digestibility. “These beneficial organisms produce numerous

helpful enzymes as well as antibiotic and anticarcinogenic substances,” emphasized Fallon in her dense yet indispensable tome of ancestral cuisine from around the world.

“One of the key things about cultured foods is that they have always been a part of traditional foods, and it has only been in the last 50 years that we have lost this connection with them,” added Malcolm Saunders, a nutritionist and ‘intuitive chef’ in Calgary.

Saunders encourages everyone to start making and consuming raw, unpasteurized, fermented foods, not only to support a healthy diet, but also to promote a socially-conscious lifestyle. He says that students particularly can benefit from eating fermented foods. “Cultured food will increase your gut flora and that’s going to help with digestion and your immune system. This will give students greater levels of health and vitality, which will reduce their reliance on the health care system,” he explained.

The last thing anyone needs is a battle with an infection while under academic pressure. Yet all too often students find themselves in this very predicament.

“I usually get sick after mid-terms or after finals,” said Candace Riley, a third-year biological sciences major. Already familiar with the benefits of traditionally cultured foods, Riley says she would be willing to make her own if she knew how.

“I would actually try [making cultured foods],” added Theresa Steele, a fourth-year mechanical engineering student. “I would make kimchi because I already love it.”

Many students are already enjoying these cultured foods and are even beginning to show a desire to make their own.

“There is a local, small-scale arts and crafts movement that is reawakening the inspiration to create food at home,” said Saunders, who offers fermentation workshops at the Light Cellar, a family-owned superfoods shop in Bowness.

“Most people don’t realize that cultured foods are easy, fun and inexpensive to make,” he said, refuting the prevailing assumption that fermented foods require expensive kitchen aides and expertise.

“Though there is specialized equipment for fermenting foods, the poorest people throughout time have always done it with found materials in creative ways,” he continued.

For those who prefer not to make their own cultured foods, the Light Cellar offers a variety of fermented delicacies, including seaweeds, harvest fruit and traditional fermented vegetables.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDENT-FRIENDLY SAUERKRAUT RECIPE:

EQUIPMENT: One wide mouthed mason jar, a strong bag filled with water, a cloth
INGREDIENTS: One small head of cabbage, sea salt

DIRECTIONS:

Chop or grate cabbage.

Sprinkle salt on the cabbage and massage through to desiccate the cabbage, creating a brine of sea salt water in the jar.

Press the shredded cabbage into the mason jar, forcing out as much water as you can.

Cover the kraut with the bag of water so that it fits snugly inside of the mason jar.

Cover the jar with a cloth.

Keep pressing the cabbage down so that it is submerged in the brine. Do this every few hours for the first day. If the cabbage does not submerge, add salt water to bring the brine level up.

Leave the kraut to ferment for one to six weeks, checking and tasting every day or two. Sometimes mould will appear on the top layer. This is a result of contact with the air and will not affect the kraut below the brine. Make sure to scrape the top layer off before consuming.

After you have achieved the desired flavour, cover with a lid and place the kraut in the fridge where the bacteria will stop fermenting.



The Light Cellar offers lessons on how to make your own home-made cultured food.

Surviving university on a vegan diet

Katrina Power

TO THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE lifestyle, the word ‘vegan’ typically conjures up the image of a plateful of grass. Unfortunately, eating a sustainable vegan diet at the University of Calgary isn’t as easy as nibbling on the bushes outside of MacHall in between classes. It’s challenging to successfully maintain a healthy vegan diet on campus, so here are some tips for those up to the challenge.

ENSURE THAT YOU’RE EATING A BALANCED DIET.

Despite contrary beliefs, vegans eat more than rabbit food. While greens are fine and dandy, vegans can’t live on spinach and wheat-grass shots alone. In addition to getting in the recommended three to five servings of vegetables, be sure to follow the vegan food pyramid. Eat enough fruit (two to four servings), grains (six to 11 servings), beans and alternatives (two to three servings), fortified dairy substitutes (two to three servings), and fats such as nuts, oils and occasionally avocados. Also, remember to throw in a treat from time to time to save yourself from deprivation — you know Twizzlers and Oreos are vegan, right?

TAKE YOUR VITAMINS.

Vitamins are your friends — embrace them. While there are numerous medical studies backing up the claim that a vegan diet can be healthier and more balanced

than an omnivorous diet, this is only if it’s done correctly. This requires a little research, planning and a few supplements. Vitamin B12 and a multivitamin usually suffice, though it doesn’t hurt to have a protein shake from time to time to boost your iron and protein levels.

PACK YOUR OWN FOOD.

For the vegans in residence, the university meal plan can be a dead end. “I didn’t purchase the food program,” said former Cascade resident and long time vegan Lexie Black. “I cooked everything for myself because there were kitchens.”

Whether you’re on or off campus, if you’re lucky enough to have access to a kitchen, use it. Packing your own meals and snacks is cheaper and healthier than eating out all the time and it’ll ensure that you actually have something to eat come lunchtime. Looking to get out of your PB&J rut? There are thousands of easy, tasty recipes online on vegan food blogs and information sites. Veggie bowls are particularly good for school lunches, as they’re portable and often keep at room temperature. To make one, just toss in a grain such as rice or quinoa, a protein such as tofu or beans and as many vegetables as possible together with either a sauce or hummus.

If you’re prone to snacking, celery or apple slices and nut butter, vegetables or pita and hummus, fruit and nut bars, or trail mix are all filling and easy to toss in your schoolbag.

SCOUT THE FOOD ON CAMPUS.

While vegetarian options are aplenty at the university, completely animal-free goods are harder to come by. “Nothing is marketed as vegan-friendly and most places require a fair bit of questioning about the ingredients to figure out what is edible,” said Black. “There are a few things, but they aren’t what I’d consider a healthy meal. Added to that, most fast foods are full of hidden sugars, fats, and sodium — definitely not something you should be eating a lot of every meal.”

Jugo Juice, Good Earth Café, Brew & Blendz, Starbucks and Fuel for Gold all offer healthy, vegan-friendly goodies. Several snacking options can be found at the Stör, the U of C pharmacy and, if you’re willing to walk that extra mile, Safeway, London Drugs, and even the small health food mart in Brentwood.

SCOUT THE FOOD IN THE CITY.

We may live in the Texas of Canada, but there is a vegan community in Calgary. If you have money to spare and would like to dine out, the Gratitude Café and the Coup offer strictly-vegan fare, while Buddha’s Veggie Restaurant, Open Sesame and Higher Ground Café cater to omnivores, vegetarians and vegans. If you’re looking to stretch your dollar, shop at specialty grocers Planet Organic and Community Natural Foods for items to create your own veg-



an feast at home for a fraction of the price. **NO PREACHING.**

Don’t be ‘that vegan.’ You know the one I’m talking about: the one who never shuts up about macrobiotics and who makes animal sounds while their omnivorous friends eat ham sandwiches. Don’t judge people for their dietary choices and they’ll return the favour. If they want to hear your opinion, they’ll ask for it.

Don’t forget about on-campus resources. The dieticians at the U of C Wellness Centre can help you out with meal plans and brochures. The university has its own Vegan and Vegetarian club full of members who’ll help you through the process with fun events like potlucks and recipe swaps. Also, don’t underestimate the internet, which is full of recipes and tips. Just remember to make sure the websites that you’re consulting are credible and professional.

Chili, sans ground beef: vegan recipe review

Emily Edwards

IHAVE ALWAYS BEEN SOMEWHAT IN AWE of vegan food. I have tasted some delicious meals, but have never quite dared to cook anything myself. The fear is that it cannot be possible to cook something tasty without using any animal products. Good vegan food usually tastes as if it holds some secret that I was sure I would not be able to discover. Still, I thought I would have a go.

This vegan chili recipe was perhaps a little optimistic with its preparation and cooking times. It claimed that preparation time was 10 minutes and that it would take 30 minutes to cook, but I think that the whole thing took me about an hour from start to finish. The claim that this dish would feed four people was an understatement to say the least — I had enough food for seven or eight decent sized portions.

My first (and only) problem arose before I approached the kitchen. The recipe called for buckwheat — not an easy ingredient to find; the staff in the shop hadn’t even heard of it. Search as we did, there was no sign of it upon the shelves. In the end I resorted to using rice. I toyed with

using couscous but decided rice was more substantial and it would approximately fit with the recommended cooking times for bulgur wheat.

The second instruction tells you to sauté the onion, garlic, chili powder and tofu, but also warns that the chili can stick. I’ve encountered burnt chili on the bottom of pans too often, so I erred on the side of caution and saved adding the chili until the tinned tomatoes were cooking. I decided to add the kidney beans before the tinned tomatoes, as I personally prefer them well-cooked and softened, which doesn’t happen once the tomato liquid adulterates the mixture. The recipe gives you the option to use a second can of any kind of beans, but I decided to just use more kidney beans.

To liven up the spices I added some cayenne pepper with the chili, but I think this was perhaps a little too much. The final result was almost too spicy, but fortunately the excess rice we had softened it a little.

Cooking with tofu was a new experience for me and I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect. It starts to go golden as it cooks, which seems to be right, but it needs to be stirred often as it sticks easily. I wanted to cook it for as much time as possible be-

cause I was a little afraid of the gooey texture of the raw substance. As it happened, the flavours all absorbed well and because I had cut it up into very small pieces, the texture wasn’t particularly noticeable. It just added bulk. I’m not convinced tofu has a flavour of its own, so make sure there’s plenty to be absorbed!

For aesthetic reasons, I decided not to mix the rice with the chili when I served it, but due to the spiciness of the food, everybody mixed it in themselves. My audience didn’t include any real-life vegans, but I think hungry carnivores are just as much (if not more) of a challenge to please. There weren’t too many clamours for meat, so I think it can be judged an overall success.

The end result was actually quite pleasing and didn’t even look too mushy, which can often be the problem with chili. I’m not completely sure about the use of corn, as it gives it a student appearance; perhaps something else could be substituted for a more sophisticated look.

This vegan chili is indeed easy to make, and certainly satisfies the customers. I really enjoyed the challenge of cooking a vegan recipe and will be experimenting more with this recipe in the future.



Emily Edwards/the Gauntlet

A quarter cup of rice
A half pound of tofu
14 oz can of corn
28 oz can of tomatoes
2 15 oz cans of kidney beans
1 onion, 2 garlic cloves, 1 pepper
1.5 tsp of chili spice

Racing for a delicious energy bar: vegan recipe review



Emily Macphail/the Gauntlet

480g pitted dates
240g peanuts
8 tbsp cocoa
2 tsp vanilla extract
Dash of salt

Emily Macphail

IF ASKED, THE MAJORITY OF UNIVERSITY students would say that they want to eat healthy foods that are good for their body and are both full of nutrients and close to their natural state. At the same time, as any student knows, time for cooking and money is often limited.

When I volunteered to do this recipe review, I wanted to make sure that it was a vegan recipe that would be accessible to time-crunched university students with small budgets. I found many recipes calling for soy meat alternatives, coconut butter, almond milk and other meat and dairy substitutes that tend to be expensive. Similarly, vegan snack bars such as Larabars, LUNA bars and Pure bars can cost upwards of \$2 each. With that in mind, I looked up a recipe for homemade energy bars (with two to nine ingredients that are easy to find in your grocery store), to see if I could make a cheaper version in less time than it would take to drive to the store.

It turns out that there are many food bloggers who have attempted to create their own energy bars while on cost-sav-

ing missions, so there was no shortage of recipes for me to use as a reference. In the end, I made a cocoa-version of the Peanut Butter Cookie Larabar. Using peanuts and dates with a 1:2 nuts to dates ratio, I also added cocoa, vanilla extract and salt.

Armed with just over a pound of pitted dates and the rest of my supplies, I embarked on my bar-making mission. Initially, I dumped the entire quantity of dates into the food processor, but it wasn't up for the task — a loud protest involving clunking and screeching noises resulted. Apparently the stickiness of the dates was problematic. After taking out half of the dates and adding half of the peanuts, the processing went more smoothly. I continued to add the dates and peanuts in small quantities until everything was ground into a crumbly but sticky mixture. Then I added the cocoa, vanilla extract and salt, then re-blended one final time before shaping the mixture into a large, flat rectangle on a baking tray. I was worried initially that the bars wouldn't hold together, as they seemed fairly soft and oily, but after leaving them uncovered on the counter overnight, they were sturdier and ready to cut.

Once sliced, I determined the weight and nutritional information for the bars to compare them to the real thing. At 48 grams per bar, the Peanut Butter Cookie Larabar has four grams of fibre and seven grams of protein. It also has 12 grams of fat, two grams of which are saturated. In contrast, my homemade bars clocked in at 55 grams each, with 5.5 grams fibre, 6.2 grams protein, and 9.5 grams fat (1.5 grams saturated) — fairly healthy and acceptably close to the original. I also priced out the bars based on their ingredients, as lowering the cost was a goal of this recipe. With all ingredients bought from bulk bins, each bar cost only \$0.54 — more than affordable.

As for the taste? I thought they were delicious. They were sweet, but not overly so, with a nice peanut flavour and enough cocoa to satisfy a chocolate craving without being overwhelming. I didn't taste the vanilla or the salt, but apparently salt brings out the cocoa flavour. Now that I know how to treat my food processor regarding this recipe, I'll be branching out into other flavours — the possibilities with different nuts and fruits are endless.

Gotta have my crème brûlée: recipe review

Keisha Russell

CRÈME BRULÉE IS MY NEW FAVOURITE recipe.

I have never had the guts to make this loveable dessert until now. Crème brûlée (French for “burnt cream”) is custard topped with a layer of hardened, caramelized sugar. The best thing about this recipe is it only has four ingredients that are easy on your budget. Usually, crème brûlée bakes in an oven-safe dish called a ramekin that is individually sized. I only found one large ramekin in my kitchen — I don't know any people who own regular-sized ones. With that in mind, I decided to halve the recipe.

Buying actual vanilla pods can be expensive (I purchased mine at two pods for \$7), but they can be substituted with 1.5 teaspoons of pure vanilla extract.

With my oven preheated to 325 degrees Fahrenheit and all my ingredients measured and ready, it was go time.

I must admit that when I am baking, I love to watch Netflix simultaneously. On *Beverly Hills, 90210*, Brenda and Donna were spending the summer in Paris — what a coincidence.

Bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, take it off the heat and cover with a wet

towel. Let the mixture rest, allowing the vanilla to infuse in the cream for 15 minutes. Then remove the vanilla bean, but don't throw it away! Save it for another use. For example, keep it in a container of sugar to make ‘vanilla sugar.’

In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and a quarter cup of sugar, blending the ingredients well until the mixture lightens in colour. Add the cream bit by bit while continuously stirring. After pouring the mixture into my makeshift ramekin, I placed it into a deep pan (cake pan or roasting pan, for example). Next, I filled the pan with enough hot water so that it came halfway up the sides of the ramekin.

Separating egg yolks can be tricky. Once cracked, pass the raw egg back and forth in the shell until the white drains and the yolk remains. Tempering the mixture — slowly incorporating heat into the eggs — will keep you from making scrambled eggs. So far, everything seemed to be going all right.

You're supposed to bake the crème brûlée for approximately 40 to 45 minutes until it has almost set, but still trembling in the middle. After taking the ramekin out of the pan, you can refrigerate the mixture from two hours up to three days.

Even after halving the recipe, my one large ramekin was still too small. I ended

up using only half of the mixture for the rest of the recipe.

Maybe it was me, or maybe it was my oven, but after 40 to 45 minutes my crème still trembled everywhere. I left it in for another 20 minutes, still dissatisfied with the excess swagger. I was in a rush to go to work. Covering it with plastic wrap, I put it in the fridge and hoped for the best.

I woke up the next morning excited to burn some sugar. You're supposed to take the crème brûlée out of the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before caramelizing the sugar on top. To brown the sugar, professionals use a small kitchen blowtorch. Lacking this, I used the broiler in my oven with the rack as close to the top as possible. I placed the ramekin in the same large pan surrounding it with ice water.

Had I been paying more attention to the recipe and a little less attention to Brandon Walsh's dreamy smile, I would've known to wait 30 minutes before popping it into the oven. In my haste, I put it in right away.

A word of caution: it takes seconds to burn something under the broiler! Even '90s teen dramas can wait.

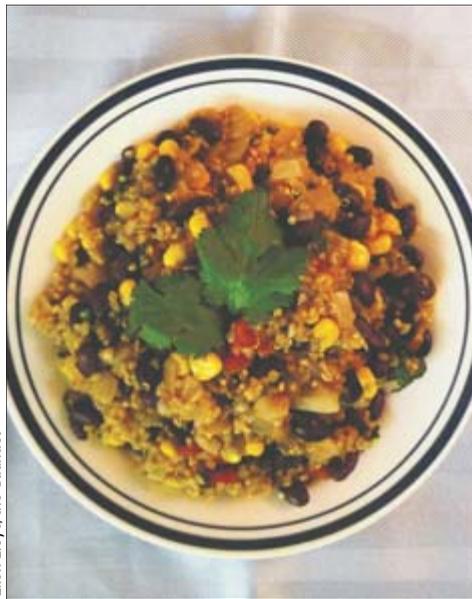
I invited my honest friend Jeff over to sample my new creation. His verdict? The crème wasn't as viscous as we thought it should be, but everything still tasted incredible.



Keisha Russell/the Gauntlet

2 cups whipping cream
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped
A half cup of sugar, divided
3 large egg yolks

Questionable quinoa: gluten-free recipe review



Ellen Lloyd/the Gauntlet

3 quarter cups of quinoa
19 oz can of black beans
1 onion, 6 garlic cloves
Half a 14 oz can of tomatoes
1 cup of corn
1 and a half cups of broth
1 tsp ground cumin

Ellen Lloyd

I'LL BE HONEST: THE FIRST TIME I made this recipe, I screwed it up. As a result, I didn't like it much, found it bland and wondered how I was going to finish the leftovers. However, I figured that before I said disparaging things about it in my review, I should really give it a second chance, and I'm glad I did. After cooking it properly the second time I found that, contrary to my first impressions, this is a delicious recipe that I plan to keep on file. In retrospect, I'm pretty sure that overcooking the quinoa on my first try made the dish quite a bit mushier than intended.

The first great thing about this recipe is its simplicity. Needing only one pot on the stove to prepare, it's not at all complicated. As I discovered, the only thing you have to watch out for is to avoid simmering the quinoa for longer than 20 minutes. Yet another bonus, this recipe is both vegan and gluten-free, plus its grains-and-beans combo is an excellent source of protein.

Quinoa is an alternative grain that is gaining in popularity. It's incredibly healthy and makes a wonderfully flavourful alternative to rice, but all good things

come with their challenges. Quinoa has a bitter coating called saponin, which protects the grain from insects and fungi while it grows. Thus, one important step is to rinse the quinoa grains before cooking, unless the package specifically states that they have been prewashed. A fine sieve is ideal for this, but I managed all right by swirling the grains in a bowl with water and carefully draining off the excess. Rinse the grains until the water runs off relatively clear and you should be fine — the idea is to get rid of most of the saponin, but don't worry about it too much.

I thought this recipe called for more beans than was necessary, so I used one 19 ounce can instead of the two 15 ounce cans it suggested. My second modification was to add half a can of diced tomatoes, which provided a nice addition to the flavour palette. Lastly, I doubled the garlic for a total of six cloves — I do like garlic.

As a note to those who might be unfamiliar with culinary terminology, a clove of garlic and a bulb of garlic are not the same thing. Bulbs are the onion-shaped things you buy at the store; if you take one and separate it into segments, each segment is one clove.

When working with cilantro, a chef

should always be aware that, due at least in part to genetic factors, some people are 'cilantrophobes.' To this minority of the population, cilantro tastes like soap or, worse, bugs. So before you try making a dish full of cilantro, try tasting or sniffing a leaf of it. If it tastes fresh and leafy (herbs are just leaves after all) go for it. If you can't stand it, try substituting a different herb, like parsley. Fresh mint or basil are also good options for a slightly stronger flavour.

Once I made the dish properly, I enjoyed it much more. Additionally, this dish is 10 times better when served cold. When warm it's okay, but I found that the heat clashed with the spicy warmth of the cumin and cayenne, and caused the flavours and textures to meld together. After I left this dish to chill overnight in the fridge, it was perfect. I enjoyed it as a cool yet spicy salad of sorts — a delightful meal and definitely one I will make again in the future.

Unfortunately, the leftovers didn't last long enough for me to try any variations, but I think this recipe would go very well with salsa, sour cream or any combination of the above. It would also make a great tortilla filling for a gluten-free Mexican night.

Chicken about chickpeas: gluten-free recipe review

Julia Shaw

I CAME ACROSS THIS RECIPE for simple roasted chickpeas several months ago but never got around to trying it. I am glad I did since they are absolutely delicious. Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are gluten-free and are full of protein to keep you full and energized throughout the day. In general, dry or canned beans are cheap, versatile and easy to prepare. This snack can be prepared as the oven preheats.

I browsed through a few variations of flavour combinations others have used and chose three to try out: cayenne-spiced, cinnamon and honey, and Moroccan-spiced. However, for those who are well acquainted with spices, feel free to play with this simple recipe.

Since chickpeas are cheap, I recommend stocking your shelves with them and other varieties of beans as well, so that you can quickly prepare a healthy snack whenever the need arises. The basic instructions for roasted chickpeas are open the can(s), rinse, drizzle with oil, sprinkle salt and other spices, roast and enjoy. What I love about this recipe is how this basic ingredient can be transformed to fit whatever flavour you are craving at that moment — it all depends on

your personal tastes and collection of spices, oils and syrups.

The recipe calls for sea salt, but feel free to swap it for regular table salt or even any other kind of salt that may be lurking in your cupboards. I used sea salt because the recipe called for it, but also because of its subtle Mediterranean flavour. Although cayenne pepper can be overwhelmingly spicy, I did not find it to be so in this recipe. If you are a fan of spice, like myself, carefully sprinkle additional cayenne pepper to taste. Other additions could include chili powder or hot sauce. Personally, I do not think there is any need to decrease the amount of cayenne pepper.

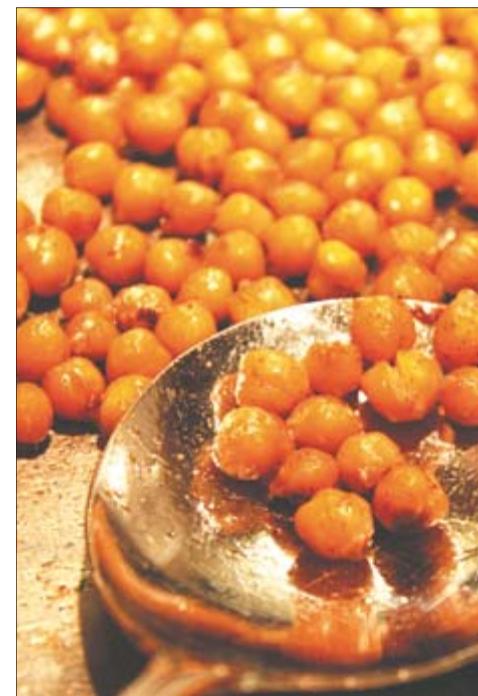
The smell of cinnamon cooking in the oven is very enticing, especially during winter. For this sweet take on roasted chickpeas I drizzled in about one tablespoon each of canola oil and honey, and half a teaspoon of cinnamon. If I were to make cinnamon-honey chickpeas again I would try a cinnamon-sugar combination, or increase the amount of cinnamon. Experiment with other spices and syrups to create new sweet flavours, such as agave or maple syrup, allspice, nutmeg, cloves, brown sugar or even chocolate if you dare.

Everything was running smoothly until

I spilled some of the chickpeas for the final batch of Moroccan-spiced on the ground. Thankfully the majority remained in the tray, because Moroccan anything is sure to create a warm atmosphere. Again, I followed the recipe instructions, but used a Moroccan spice mix: cumin, coriander, chili powder, paprika, cinnamon, allspice, ginger powder, cayenne pepper and ground cloves. I had forgotten to add the sugar, but this combination turned out great.

Cooking the chickpeas at 450 degrees Fahrenheit adds a crunchiness, which I liked. Similar recipes I looked at had lower temperatures than the one found in this recipe, but the lower the temperature, the longer it takes to cook. I roasted the cayenne-spiced and cinnamon-honey chickpeas at 425 degrees. The lower temperature was fine, but I prefer 450 degrees (which I cooked the Moroccan chickpeas at) for 15 minutes. Next time I will cook them a bit longer to add more crunchiness.

All three variations turned out splendid. I look forward to experimenting with other flavors in the future: maple-brown sugar, garlic, BBQ, and others I have mentioned are a few other combinations I came up with as afterthoughts. All of these combinations are bound to be delicious.



Julia Shaw/the Gauntlet

16–19 oz can of chickpeas
1 tbsp olive oil
A half tsp sea salt
A half tsp cayenne pepper
All spices to taste