

Pancakes satisfy vegans and gluten-free diets

By Chris Ross
The San Diego Union-Tribune

San Diego recipe developer and photographer Rachel Conners started her baking blog, Bakerita, while still in high school. When her sister was diagnosed with Lyme disease and adopted a diet free of gluten, dairy products and refined sugar, Rachel began developing recipes that her sister could still enjoy. Then she adopted a gluten-free diet herself and discovered that her headaches disappeared and her mood improved.

When she shared her new baking recipes on her blog, she found there was huge interest from people struggling with autoimmune disorders.

Now, more than 100 of her recipes are collected in her first cookbook, “Bakerita.” There are all kinds of healthy treats, from breakfast baked goods to chocolate chip cookies, an Apple Crumble Pie and even home-made gummy bears.

She says this recipe for vegan pancakes is a good starting point that can easily be customized: “The applesauce can be swapped out for banana or

pumpkin puree to create your own flavor variations — banana-walnut or pumpkin-chocolate chip pancakes, anyone?”

FLUFFY VEGAN PANCAKES

This recipe doubles or triples easily to serve more people.
Makes 6 to 7 small pancakes

½ cup unsweetened almond milk or other dairy-free milk
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 cup gluten-free rolled oats
¼ cup unsweetened applesauce
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract (optional)
1 tablespoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
[teaspoon kosher salt
Coconut oil, for cooking
Pure maple syrup, coconut yogurt, fresh fruit, nut butter, bittersweet chocolate, or a combination of any, for serving

In a small bowl or liquid measuring cup, combine the milk and vinegar and let the mixture stand for about 5 minutes to curdle.

In a blender, combine the curdled milk, oats, applesauce, maple syrup, vanilla, baking powder, cinnamon if using, and salt. Blend for about 30 seconds until the oats are broken down and the batter is quite smooth. Let the batter stand for about 5 minutes to thicken up.

While the batter thickens, heat a skillet or griddle pan over medium heat until it’s medium-hot. Grease the pan with a small amount of coconut oil. Ladle or pour ¼ cup batter into the pan and gently spread out with the ladle or the back of a spoon. (If you’re using a griddle or large pan, you can cook more than one pancake at a time.) Cook until the edges of the pancake look cooked, about 2 minutes. Flip the pancake gently and cook until golden brown, another 1 to 2 minutes. Keep the heat medium-hot to prevent burning. Transfer the pancake to a plate and keep warm by covering with a clean dish towel.



Rachel Conners /TNS

No dairy products are required for Rachel Conners’ Fluffy Vegan Pancakes, from “Bakerita.”

Repeat until all of the batter is gone, adding a little more oil to the pan between each pancake and stacking them on top of each other on the plate.

Serve warm, with maple syrup, yogurt, fresh fruit, nut butter, and/or chocolate.

If saving these pancakes for later, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 4 days. Reheat in the microwave for 15 to 30 seconds.

REMEMBER

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We, of course, waited in the long line through the Vatican Museum to get a glimpse of the Sistine Chapel, which was crowded as we looked upward at Michelangelo’s ceiling masterpiece.

From there, it was a flight back to Athens, where we switched to a smaller plane and headed for Chania on the western tip of Crete. We rented a car (a Skoda, pride of the Czech Republic) and proceeded on the most terrifying stretch of highway I’ve ever tried

“There is one two-lane highway on Crete, but it’s treated as if it was four lanes. So I hugged the shoulder to avoid the cars careening in my direction around every corner. My wife mostly closed her eyes.”

corner. My wife mostly closed her eyes.

For the next two weeks, we lived in a room with that incredible view. Every day, my wife would go to the beach.

I had interviews every day and was engaged in yelling matches with my boss back in Athens who wanted more of this and that and it was all very stressful.

We were able to escape one day, driving up a narrow road into the rolling hills with olive groves dotting the landscape. We stopped outside a village where two old men were playing some sort of

board game on a front porch. Nearby, a man offered donkey rides down to the village.

We visited a monastery and purchased a number of bottles of olive oil that are produced there, taking them home as gifts to friends and relatives.

One day, we drove back to Chania, which has a port built long ago by the Venetians. We found what looked to be an impossibly good spot to park. And when we returned, the entrance to the spot was chained off and a parking ticket was on the trusty Skoda’s windshield. I had to drive down a

maze of narrow streets to escape.

This was to be the first Olympics after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the Greek national police guarded the U.S. team.

We befriended one of the top guards and I approached him with the parking ticket, asking what I should do about it.

He explained that I could show it to the rental car agency when I returned the vehicle and pay the fine.

“Or,” he said. “You can throw it away.”

So I did.

Gotta love those Greeks.

COMFORT

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WORLD PEACE COOKIES

Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

Note: This dough must be prepared in advance. For additional flavor, add ½ teaspoon espresso powder with the cocoa. “I once said I thought these cookies, the brainchild of Parisian pastry chef Pierre Herme, were as important a culinary breakthrough as Toll House cookies, and I’ve never thought

better of the statement,” writes Dorie Greenspan in “Baking: From My Home to Yours.” Greenspan initially introduced these members of the sable family in her “Paris Sweets” cookbook, but under a different name: Korova Cookies. Her neighbor believed that a daily bite of these easy-to-prepare cut-and-bake cookies “is all that is needed to ensure planetary peace and prosperity,” wrote Greenspan. “I prefer them at room temperature, when the textural difference between the crumbly cookie and the chocolate bits is greatest.”

1¼ cups flour
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup plus 3 tablespoons (1 stick plus 3 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2/3 cup light brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt (or ½ teaspoon fleur de sel)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped into chip-size pieces (roughly ¾ cup)

In a medium bowl, sift the flour, cocoa and baking powder together, and reserve.

In a bowl of an electric mixer on medium speed, beat butter until soft and creamy, about 1 minute. Add brown sugar, granulated sugar, salt and vanilla extract, and beat for 2 additional minutes.

Reduce speed to low, add flour mixture and mix until just combined, working the dough as little as possible. Fold in chocolate pieces.

Turn the dough out onto

a clean work surface. Gather dough together and divide it in half. Working one half at a time, shape the (sticky) dough into logs that are 1½ inches in diameter. Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours (dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 2 months; if using frozen dough, no need to defrost, just slice the logs into cookies and bake 1 minute longer).

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 325 degrees and line baking sheets with parch-

ment paper.

Using a sharp, thin knife, slice the logs into rounds that are ½ inch thick (the rounds are likely to crack as you’re cutting them; just squeeze the bits back into each cookie) and place 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake cookies 1 sheet at a time for 12 minutes. They won’t look done, nor will they be firm, but that’s just the way they should be. Remove from oven and cool 2 minutes before transferring cookies to a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.



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