

Simple substitutions

Typical ingredient: minced meat

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Lentils (puy, beluga or green are best depending on recipe) Experiment with other pulses , like black beans, chickpeas, carlin peas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheap• High protein• High fibre	Whole small lentils will give you more bite than the larger varieties that tend to break down. Match your pulse to the cuisine, e.g., black beans for Mexican, chickpeas for Indian etc. Try drying cooked pulses in an oven for about 10 minutes for a firmer texture.
Crumbled tempeh or firm tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High protein• Considered ‘complete’ proteins with all 9 essential amino acids	Both great at absorbing marinades and flavours. Tofu will benefit from combining with seeds (e.g., sunflower) or nuts (e.g., walnuts) for more texture.
Mushrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deeply umami• Good protein• Packed with micronutrients	Shiitake and King oyster mushrooms are the best both in terms of texture and umami flavour. Other mushrooms are ideal for combining with firmer ingredients.
Textured vegetable protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very cheap• High protein• High fibre• Versatile	Most commonly made from soy. Often comes dehydrated and as mince or in small chunks.
Branded vegan products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most similar texture properties to animal counterparts	Often based on soy or pea protein, you can find it fresh or frozen to suit your needs if time-poor.

Typical ingredient: pulled meat

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Shredded oyster mushrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deeply umami• Good protein• Packed with micronutrients	Oyster and king oyster mushrooms have the perfect texture for mimicking pulled meat if shredded or pulled with a fork.
Jackfruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High protein• High fibre	Stringy texture which easily absorbs seasonings and sauces. Can be bought fresh or canned; if canned consider boiling first, to remove the brine flavour.

Typical ingredient: chunks of meat

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Firm tofu or tempeh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High protein	Check out our guide to tofu on page 19 in the Chef’s Toolkit.
Seitan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very high protein	Made from wheat gluten. Can have a chewy or spongy texture, depending on how it is cooked.
Portobello mushroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deeply umami• Good protein• Packed with micronutrients	Large and sturdy, making them ideal for grilling or baking whole.
Branded vegan products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most similar texture properties to animal counterparts	Explore the range of different animal alternatives, including chicken, cow, pig, lamb and more.

Typical ingredient: cream

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Coconut milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store cupboard ingredient• Relatively cheap	Fantastic in curries, soups, sauces and puddings.
Silken tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Luxury product for high-end dishes• Protein-packed	Great blended into sauces and puddings.
Nut or seed creams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy fats• Fibre• Protein	For the smoothest creams, soak nuts and seeds in hot water and drain before blending in a high-speed blender.
Gram (chickpea) flour soaked with water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very cheap	Stirred into a sauce, simmered until thick. Toasting the gram flour in a dry pan for a minute or two will remove the raw, bitter flavour.
Branded vegan creams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most similar properties to animal counterpart	Many commercial varieties are available, usually based on soy, oat or coconut.

Typical ingredient: honey

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Alternative sweet syrups like maple, golden and agave	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Easily accessible store cupboard ingredients	Simply adding an interesting sugar, e.g., light Muscovado, will bring both sweetness and a hint of caramel flavour.

Typical ingredient: eggs

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Crumbled firm tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High protein	Brilliant for texture in meals like fried rice or scrambled tofu.
Gram flour + water or plant milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High fibreHigh protein	Great natural egg replacer, as it works as both a binder and leavener, making it perfect for baked goods, omelettes, frittatas or scrambles.
Aquafaba (chickpea can water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CheapHealthier than eggs (no cholesterol)	Substitute for egg white in meringues—just blend with sugar and voila! Its ability to form stable foams, especially with the addition of cream of tartar, makes it useful as a binder, emulsifier and thickener.
Yellow mung beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High in proteinHigh fibre	Fantastic and super healthy scramble substitute!
Flaxseed or chia seed and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High in Omega-3s	Acts as a binder in baking.
Black salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extremely potent egg flavour	It's delicious but go carefully!
Apple sauce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High fibre	Useful as a binder when baking.

Typical ingredient: cheese

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Nutritional yeast (for flavour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Protein-richHigh in B vitamins	Great on its own or blended with toasted ground seeds or nuts as a parmesan replacement.
Blended soaked nuts (for texture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High proteinHealthy fatsHigh fibre	Cashews give the smoothest, most versatile base.
Branded vegan cheeses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adds richnessA variety of flavours and textures	Worth exploring the range as there is lots of variety on the market, with some better at melting than others. Luxury fermented artisan products are also available.

Typical ingredient: fish

PLANT-BASED SUBSTITUTIONS	BENEFITS	NOTES
Seaweed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Packed with micronutrients	Can be used to marinate tofu or banana blossom for fishy flavours. Also consider grinding or blending dry seaweed for a seasoning.
Banana blossom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High in fibre and micronutrients	Great flaky texture, can be battered or used in curries or even as “fish” cakes.
Branded vegan fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ProteinCan be very realistic	Variety in the market, from vegan “scampi” to “fish” fillets. It is worth exploring the range to find the best fit for your dishes.

