

The Food For The Soul Guide To Unlocking The Secrets To A Flavor Filled Vegan Kitchen



By Ama T. Opare

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TOP 10 INGREDIENTS I ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE IN MY PANTRY (MY SECRET TO AMAZING FLAVOR PACKED RAW FOOD)

The secret to creating amazing flavor packed dishes is layering the five flavors, sweet, sour, bitter, salty and spicy. One or more of these 10 ingredients are what I use in most of my recipes.

1. NAMA SHOYU

An unpasteurized soy sauce.



2. MIRIN

Sweet rice cooking wine.
Use ONLY Eden brand.



3. CHIPOTLE PEPPER POWDER

Adds a smoky spice to your dish.



4. GARLIC

I prefer elephant garlic. It is easier to use.



5. ITALIAN SEASONING

Fast and easy flavor for dressings and sauces.



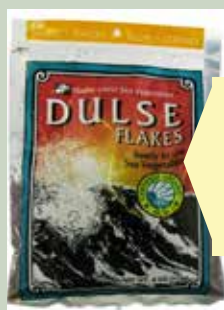
6. LEMONS/LIMES

Sour and tart flavor that makes your dish pop.



7. DULSE FLAKES

Adds a salty seafood flavor to dressings, pate, sauces.



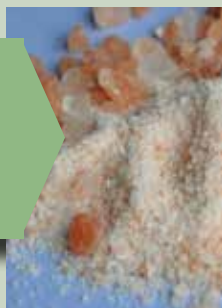
8. MEDJOL DATES

Soft sweetness to replace sugars.



9. HIMALAYAN CRYSTAL SALT

Grind this mineral rich salt in a salt grinder.



10. NUTRITIONAL YEAST

For cheesy, buttery flavors.



Tools In A Vegan and Living Foods Kitchen

Part of a whole foods plant-based diet includes replacing processed food with your own home made options. These tools will be very helpful for expanding your options and speeding up your preparation time.

Tools You Will Need:

Blender—A high-powered model such as a Vita-Mix or Blend-Tec.

Food Processor—A basic model is fine. A shredder and slicer attachment is handy.

Sharp knives—A chef's knife and paring knives at a minimum.

Grater

Citrus Juicer—a small hand one and/or a larger one such as the Hamilton Beach press.

Dehydrator—for raw/living foods kitchens.

Juicer—to make fresh fruit and vegetable juice.

Optional items: Not Necessary But Will Make Your Life Easier

Small food processor

Mandolin—for making very thin slices of fruit and vegetables.

Spiralizer—for making noodles out of veggies.

Salad Spinner—to dry your lettuce and greens.

Garlic Press—for easy minced garlic.

Blend-Tech High Speed Blender	Vita Mix High Speed Blender	Cuisinart Food Processor	Hamilton Beach Citrus Juicer
			
Sedona Dehydrator	Excalibur Dehydrator	Omega Juicer	Spiralizer
			

Making Your Own Vinaigrette Dressing

Vinaigrette dressings are a key part of my vegan and raw food kitchen. A vinaigrette is often the base of many of my recipes. I use it as a marinade for vegetables, as a base for a sauce.

Homemade salad dressings tastes so much better than bottled dressings. Once you learn how to make your own you won't want to use the bottled ones anymore.

There are many variations that you can make just by using different oils, different vinegar, different spices and different seasonings to create flavors from around the world. Refer to the spices and seasonings pages for some ideas about different flavor combinations that you can use to complement your meal.

Basic Vinaigrette

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Nama Shoyu or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 1/2 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

Place ingredients in a jar with a lid and shake well, or whisk together.

Variations

- Replace the vinegar with lemon, lime or orange juice for citrus flavor.
- Substitute avocado or hemp or sunflower seeds for oil. Blend to create an oil free creamy dressing.
- Add fresh or sun dried tomatoes and blend until creamy.
- Use minced fresh herbs in place of or in addition to dried herbs.

Balancing Flavors

There are five basic flavors, sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory or spicy. Each dish, or meal should have a balance of each of these flavors. If one is missing the dish or meal will taste flat. This doesn't mean they need to be in equal amounts, just that there should be SOME of each.

For desserts a dash of salt is often added. For many dishes a touch of sweetness is added. If your dish seems to be missing something, taste to see what flavor is missing or needs intensifying.

- Sweet: Sweeteners, fruit, sweet veggies such as corn, carrots, sweet potatoes
- Salty: Salt, soy sauce, miso, seaweed, pickled veggies
- Sour: Citrus, vinegars, pickled veggies
- Bitter: Greens, broccoli, okra
- Savory/Spicy: Mushrooms, miso, spices, hot peppers, ground pepper, hot sauce, mustard, wasabi, arugula, watercress radishes.

Vegan Substitutes

Eating vegan doesn't mean you have to give up all of your favorite things. While I don't use these items regularly they are helpful when you are new to vegan food.

Taste and functionality varies by brand. Keep trying different ones until you find one you like. **Be sure to read the ingredients carefully to insure that there are no animal product ingredients included. It should say Vegan on the label.**



Eggs - For baking:

Egg Replacer - There are a number of products on the market. Brands include Ener-G, Bob's Red Mill, and Vegg.

Ground Flax seed - 1 TBL Ground flaxseed mixed with 3 TBL water equals one egg.

Ripe banana - One half mashed banana will equal one egg in baked goods.

Unsweetened Applesauce- 1/4 cup applesauce equals one egg in baked goods.

Chia seeds - 1 TBL chia seeds mixed with 1/3 cup water equals one egg.

Butter

Vegan Margarine with no trans fats

Coconut Oil - Add to rice when you are cooking and use in baking.

Olive Oil - On pasta, baked potatoes, veggies and bread.

Walnut Oil - We use this on pancakes

Milk

Nut, grain and seed milks such as almond milk, rice milk, soy milk, coconut. Widely available in stores or make your own by soaking nuts or seeds and blending with water.

Vegan cheeses, cream cheese, sour cream, yogurt. Read labels carefully. Daiya is a popular brand that melts well.

Ice cream - There are many delicious vegan frozen desserts available these days. Some are even available in your neighborhood grocery store. We especially like the So Delicious brand made with coconut milk.

Veggie "Meat" - There are many options in the freezer or refrigerated case in your grocer or health food store. Look for these as well as a wide variety of other options:

Lunch meat

Chick'n nuggets, strips and patties

Sausage/hot dogs etc.

Veggie Burgers

Ground crumbles

Vegan Meat Alternatives: Tofu, Tempeh, TVP and Seitan



Tofu

Tofu is the most well-known meat alternative. It originated in China thousands of years ago. Tofu is made from soybeans that are ground, mixed with water and then processed in a method similar to how cheese is made. It doesn't have a lot of flavor on its own but does a great job of absorbing the flavors of your sauces or seasonings.

Tofu comes in different firmnesses. Use Extra-Firm and Firm for stir-frying or anytime you want the tofu to retain its shape. Silken and soft tofu are great for adding creaminess to soups, dips and sauces. They can replace cream cheese and other soft cheeses.



Tempeh

Tempeh originates from Indonesia. It is traditionally also made from soybeans, although other beans and grains can be used as well. Dehulled soybeans are soaked and cooked then are allowed to ferment.

Tempeh has a firm texture and an earthy flavor which becomes more pronounced as it ages. It has a very different taste than tofu. The tempeh cakes are sliceable and make a good meat alternative on sandwiches or in stir-fry. It will absorb the flavor of your sauces and seasonings, making it very versatile.



TVP/Textured Vegetable Protein

TVP or texturized vegetable protein, soy meat, or soya chunks is made from soy flour. It comes in a range of sizes from chunks to flakes. It is dehydrated and must be rehydrated with water. This makes it ideal to have on hand in your pantry.

TVP is often used to replace ground meat in recipes such as chili, spaghetti and meatloaf. The chunks can replace cut up chicken. It doesn't have a lot of flavor of its own and absorbs the flavor of your seasonings and sauces.



Seitan

Seitan (say-tahn) also called wheat gluten, wheat meat, gluten meat, or simply gluten, is made from gluten, the main protein of wheat. It is made by mixing flour and water and forming a dough, washing the dough with water until all the starch has been removed. The sticky insoluble gluten that remains is then cooked before being eaten. The result is similar to the look and texture of meat when cooked.

Wheat gluten is an alternative to soybean-based meat substitutes but may be a problem of those avoiding gluten. Wheat gluten is often used instead of meat in vegetarian Asian dishes. As with the other meat alternatives, seitan will absorb the flavors of your sauces and seasoning.





The Magic Of Spice

I love spices. They are the key to making satisfying healthy meals. Getting comfortable using and combining spices will make a big difference in the dishes you make.

Spices come in fresh, dried, ground, roasted and smoked. Each form functions differently in recipes. It is difficult to know how to replace a whole form with a ground form. Some are more intense ground, others are less intense. It is a trial and error experiment to find what works.

Each region of the world has its own favorite spice combinations. Many of the recipes I post on Food For The Soul utilize some of these combinations. I have been into Indian flavors of late. The aroma coming out of my kitchen when I am making dal is tantalizing. I also love making recipes from different regions of Afrika.

Where can you find spices? Many are available in your neighborhood grocery stores. Look for international markets for less common varieties. There are online sources for spices as well.

Here are the spices I try to always have on hand.

- Cumin Seeds
- Ground Cumin
- Curry Powder
- Cardamom Pods
- Ground cardamom
- Coriander Seeds
- Ground Coriander
- Mustard Seeds
- Ground Mustard

Whole Spices In My Kitchen

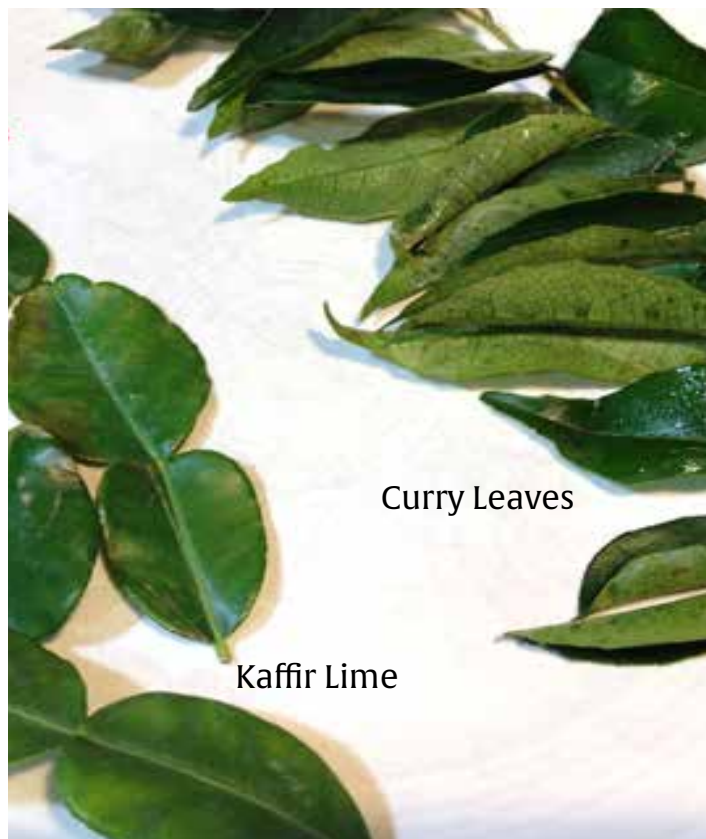


- Turmeric
- Paprika
- Fenugreek
- Allspice
- Nutmeg
- Chili Powder
- Chipotle Pepper Powder
- Whole Cloves
- Ground Cloves
- Cayenne Pepper
- Red Pepper Flakes
- Black Pepper Corns
- Fennel Seed
- Ground Fennel
- Ground Cinnamon
- Ginger Root
- Ground Ginger
- Vanilla Bean
- Vanilla Extract
- Vanilla Powder

I recently discovered that my local international market has fresh curry leaves and kaffir lime leaves. I have seen them in recipes but I had never tried using them. Kaffir lime adds an authentic Thai flavor to your dishes.

I LOVE the curry leaves. They are used in Indian cuisine and their smell is fabulous. Curry leaves are not the same as curry powder. Curry powder is really a mix of a variety of spices. Different curry powders have different flavors due to the difference in the mixture of spices used. The same with chili powder.

I encourage you to keep your pantry stocked with spices. Look for international recipes to see how to use them. Start with the amounts indicated in the recipe. Taste and adjust as needed. I often use more than what is called for. Try your own combinations as you get familiar with the flavors and are more comfortable using spices.



International Flavors

Many international cuisines adapt easily to a vegan diet and are much less focused on animal products. You can re-create these highly flavorful tastes in your kitchen with the spices, seasonings and ingredients that are easily available in most stores.

Here are common spices, herbs and flavor combinations used in international dishes.

Mexican



Italian



Middle Eastern



Thai



Caribbean



Indian



Chinese



I encourage you to give these a try. There are many great vegan cookbooks available with recipes from around the world. In addition I have quite a few on Food For The Soul.

The Most Important Ingredient Is YOU!

Yes, there are new gadgets, appliances and ingredients that you need when transitioning to a vegan lifestyle and kitchen. However, the most important ingredient you need in your kitchen is you!

Here is what I recommend to anyone learning how to incorporate vegan or raw vegan dishes into their diets.

- Experiment, Experiment, Experiment! Don't be afraid to substitute ingredients. You will undoubtedly make some mistakes. This is an important part of the learning process. This is how you will learn what works and what doesn't. Remember that you will learn as much by recipes that flop as you will from recipes that are winners.
- As you make changes to a recipe make notes about what you did and how you liked it. Write the changes in the margin of the recipe. Make comments about what your impressions are.
- Make it your mission to try new recipes on a regular basis, especially while you are learning. This will help you acquire the new skills you need and get familiar with the new ingredients. Search online for recipes and add vegan recipe books to your library.

Watch this video on YouTube for more. (click on the image)



Now you have the basic information for unlocking the secrets of a flavorful vegan kitchen. I challenge you to move past the desire or goal of making your food taste “just like” your old animal product based diet. Instead, embrace and rejoice in the new and amazing taste opportunities that await you. Food For The Soul is here to help you on that journey. *Ama Opare*

TAKE THE NEXT STEP...

Now that you know how to make tasty vegan food it's time to make being healthy a habit!

Find Out How Coaching Can Make The Difference

Become **Whole & Healthy** in all aspects of your life so you can bring your best game to the world. Gain energy, focus and clarity and be the powerful woman that you really are.

Wholeness is nurturing and healing ourselves emotionally, physically, spiritually, and interpersonally so that we can embrace the fullness of who we are, discover our unique gifts and share them with the world.

As your private coach I'm your personal support system to guide you. We'll work closely together to keep you on track and moving forward towards your goals. We'll focus on living a healthy Whole Food Plant Based diet lifestyle and **much, much more**.

Whole & Healthy provides the mindset, tools, and skills you need to be able to create and sustain wellness in all aspects of your life; mind, body and spirit. It's a program that looks beyond diet and eating and explores FOOD from a broader perspective:

SPIRIT FOOD connects us to our inner power and purpose. It aligns us with our true desires and true self and so we can stop the self sabotaging behaviors and stay on our healthy path.

MIND FOOD guides us towards mastering the skills for creating and living a Whole & Healthy lifestyle that works for us. It gives us the knowledge to cut through all the confusion and end our overwhelm about what we should be eating and doing to best care for our whole selves.

POWER FOOD helps us create strategies for thriving despite the unhealthy world we live in. It empowers us to stay true to our convictions and make the right decisions even when we're surrounded by all the wrong choices, so we become Whole & Healthy and unstoppable!

Spirit Food + Mind Food + Power Food = Food For The Soul

The **Whole and Healthy Program** is a one-on-one coaching and training program that can shift the entire trajectory of your life, no matter where you are right now, in an incredibly short period of time so you can Start Thriving-Whole and Healthy.

I'm here to help you find the confidence, courage, and clarity inside yourself so you can create the healthy lifestyle you've been dreaming of. My role is not to tell you what to do, it's to partner with you as you navigate your real-world day-to-day life, to help you to look at the problems or obstacles you've been struggling with, with new eyes...and to discover effective, tailor made skills and solutions to build your sustainable, **Whole & Healthy**, vegan lifestyle.

On a scale from 1-10 how ready are you to be done with this?

To find out more and schedule your free inquiry session, visit <https://foodforthesoul.me/coaching>



As a plant-based lifestyle coach, my philosophy is that ...

- ~ A healthy lifestyle shouldn't be complicated. A common sense approach will stand the test of time and outlast the latest fad diet.
- ~ You are your own best resource for success. Learning to listen to what your experiences and body is telling you is the foundation of creating a plan that will change your life.
- ~ Healthy food should be delicious! You don't have to sacrifice taste to be healthy.

When you work privately with me you'll walk away with:

- ~ Clarity about what your healthy diet and lifestyle really is
- ~ Strength and resolve to stay on your healthy lifestyle course no matter what life brings your way
- ~ The confidence and skills to create food you love to eat

Find out more at foodforthesoul.me/coaching



[Find me on YouTube](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

About Me

I'm a plant-based wellness and lifestyle coach, educator, vegan and raw vegan chef, cook book author, graphic designer and owner of Food For The Soul Global.

You are meant to be Whole and Healthy. My job as your coach is to help you tap into your own inner wisdom and experience to discover what works best for you. To help you uncover and remove your roadblocks and discover your own personal recipe for Thriving-Whole and Healthy.



My clients go from self-sabotage to taking control. From mealtime boredom to loving what they eat. From being tempted by all the wrong choices to making the right decisions. And from being sick and tired to living a vibrant and healthy life.

Before 2007, I was over weight and worried about my health. I couldn't control my cravings for burgers and fries. I was forever going to Wendy's for a mushroom swiss burger, often stopping on my way back to work from a supply shopping trip, even when I had told myself I wasn't going to. I'd scarf it down greedily, and then feel terrible about my self!

I had WANTED to go vegetarian to get healthy for decades (I didn't even know about vegan then) but I didn't know how. I'd go to the food co-op and try to figure out what I should buy and spend way too much money. When I got home I struggled to make it taste good! And everything was cheese, cheese, cheese.

In 2007, I opened the door to a new way of life by becoming completely vegan. I embraced this new lifestyle and it changed my life in so many ways. I can't imagine ever going back.

I'm a teacher at heart and was eager to share what I had discovered to help other folks like me figure out how to make being plant-based work. For 10 years I used my decades of education experience in my work with Dr. Opare at Opare Institute to create in-depth in-person and online education programs and coached many people just like you, who are ready to take charge of their health and well-being.

In 2016 I packed up my life in Atlanta, GA and moved across the world to Arusha, Tanzania, in East Africa. I have found a life of peace and freedom here. While there are challenges of course, I know the Ancestors are with me always and these challenges are learning opportunities for my growth and progress. And I've been given a glimpse of how I believe we are meant to live.

It has been a Sankofa experience. Sankofa is a West African adinkra symbol meaning to move forward by reaching back to pick up what we have left behind. Our ancestors knew how to live healthy.

It's time we reclaim our heritage so that we can return to our Whole and Healthy birthright.

As of early 2021 I have stepped out on my own by creating Food For The Soul Global, LLC. I continue my commitment to helping you create the healthy diet and lifestyle you've been struggling to maintain. You will now find the courses and material I created for Opare Institute at Food For The Soul and Black Vegan Academy.



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