

The Animal-Based Kitchen Swap Chart

Turn any recipe animal-based without losing the flavor.

STRICT SWAP uses only the lowest-toxicity foods: ruminant meat & organs, eggs, dairy, fruit (including squash, zucchini, avocado, olives), honey, maple, tallow, butter, ghee, salt, rosemary, thyme, basil and cilantro.

FLEXIBLE SWAP adds medium-tier foods many people tolerate well: carrots, sweet potato, white rice, sourdough, sauerkraut, pork, chicken, seafood, olive/coconut oil, coconut aminos, oregano, dill, mint, parsley and Ceylon cinnamon.

THE FLAVOR RULE Salt early to deepen, fat to carry flavor, acid at the end to brighten, and high heat for browning. When a dish tastes flat, it almost always needs salt or a squeeze of citrus.

AROMATICS & SEASONINGS

INSTEAD OF	WHAT IT DOES	STRICT SWAP	FLEXIBLE SWAP	CHEF'S TIP
Onion	Sweet, savory base for soups, sauces & braises	Apples or pears caramelized slowly in butter; reduced bone broth	Add diced carrot for extra sweetness	Cook fruit low for 20+ min until deep amber. About 1 small apple per onion.
Garlic	Pungent punch & aroma	Brown butter + fresh rosemary or thyme; simmer a parmesan rind in sauces	Oregano, parsley or dill	Bloom herbs in hot fat for 30 seconds to release their aroma.
Black pepper	Sharp bite	Flaky salt + a squeeze of lemon or lime at the end	Fresh mint or dill for a sharp finish	Salt early, acid at the end. The contrast replaces the bite.
Chili, cayenne, paprika	Heat & red color	No true swap. Lean on hard char, acid and sweet-salty contrast (honey + flaky salt)	Ceylon cinnamon adds warmth to braises	Call spicy dishes a "twist," not a copy. Readers will trust you more.
Cumin, curry & spice blends	Earthy, warm depth	Browned tallow + thyme + rosemary; deeply seared meat	Ceylon cinnamon, oregano	Sear in batches. Crowded pans steam instead of brown.
MSG, bouillon cubes, mushrooms	Savory umami depth	Reduced bone broth, aged parmesan, finely grated liver, bone marrow	Anchovy (sourced carefully)	1 tsp grated frozen liver per lb of ground beef adds invisible depth.
Soy sauce	Salty umami	Salt + reduced bone broth	Coconut aminos, 1:1 (slightly sweeter)	With coconut aminos, cut other sweeteners in the recipe a little.
Vinegar	Acid & brightness	Lemon or lime juice, kefir, yogurt, pomegranate molasses (100% fruit)	Pickle or sauerkraut brine	Swap 1:1, then taste. Add acid in small splashes at the end.

SAUCES & CONDIMENTS

INSTEAD OF	WHAT IT DOES	STRICT SWAP	FLEXIBLE SWAP	CHEF'S TIP
Tomatoes & tomato sauce	Sweet-tart body & red color	Roasted butternut or pumpkin + lemon; cherries or pomegranate for red sauces	Blend in roasted carrot	Finish with fresh basil and lemon so squash tastes bright, not sweet.
Ketchup & BBQ sauce	Sweet, tangy glaze	Cherries, peaches or mango + honey + lemon, simmered down	Splash of pickle brine for tang	Reduce until it coats a spoon; it thickens more as it cools.
Store-bought mayo	Creamy base (usually seed oil)	Sour cream or crème fraîche; warm butter-yolk sauce (hollandaise)	Homemade mayo with light olive or avocado oil	Room-temperature yolks emulsify far more easily.
Bottled dressings	Coating & flavor	Yogurt or sour cream + fresh herbs + lemon + salt	Olive oil + lemon + oregano	Make a jar on Sunday; herb-dairy dressings keep 4-5 days chilled.
Peanut & nut butters	Rich, spreadable fat	Honey-whipped butter or cream cheese	Coconut butter	Whip butter with honey and a pinch of salt for 2 minutes until fluffy.

STARCHES & BASES

INSTEAD OF	WHAT IT DOES	STRICT SWAP	FLEXIBLE SWAP	CHEF'S TIP
Wheat pasta	Noodle base	Spaghetti squash, zucchini ribbons, egg + cream cheese "noodles"	White rice noodles	Salt zucchini and drain 15 min, or the sauce turns watery.
White potatoes	Mash, fries, roasts	Kabocha, butternut or plantains	Sweet potato	Kabocha is the fluffiest and most potato-like for mashing.
Brown rice, quinoa	Grain base for bowls	Crispy ground beef or roasted diced squash as the base	White rice	Use day-old, chilled rice for fried rice so it crisps.
Beans	Bulk in chili, soups & sides	Extra ground meat, diced squash	-	Brown half the meat very hard for texture contrast.
Tortillas & wraps	Handheld structure	Thin egg crepes, baked cheese shells	-	Bake cheese rounds, then drape over a spoon handle for taco shells.
Bread & buns	Sandwich structure	Cloud bread (eggs + cream cheese), beef patty "buns"	Sourdough	Toast sourdough in tallow for a golden, crisp crust.
Chips & crackers	Crunch for dipping	Plantain chips fried in tallow, parmesan or cheddar crisps	Pork rinds	Slice plantains paper-thin; fry at 350°F until they stop bubbling.

BAKING, BINDING & THICKENING

INSTEAD OF	WHAT IT DOES	STRICT SWAP	FLEXIBLE SWAP	CHEF'S TIP
Breadcrumbs (breeding)	Crispy coating	Finely grated parmesan over an egg wash	Crushed pork rinds	A 50/50 mix of parmesan and pork rinds is the crunchiest crust.
Breadcrumbs (binder)	Holds meatballs & meatloaf	Egg + grated parmesan + a spoon of ricotta	-	Mix gently. Overworked meat turns tough.
Flour or cornstarch (thickener)	Body in gravy & sauces	Reduce cream; egg-yolk liaison; reduced gelatinous bone broth; puréed squash	-	Temper yolks: whisk a little hot liquid in before adding them to the pot.
Flour (baking)	Structure in cakes & breads	Eggs + cream cheese sponge; go flourless (brownies, Basque cheesecake)	-	Pick recipes that are naturally flourless instead of forcing a swap.
Oats & granola	Crunchy topping	Freeze-dried fruit, crispy baked cheese crumble	Toasted coconut	Freeze-dried berries add crunch and color to yogurt bowls.

FATS, SWEETENERS & DAIRY

INSTEAD OF	WHAT IT DOES	STRICT SWAP	FLEXIBLE SWAP	CHEF'S TIP
Canola, vegetable & seed oils	Frying & sautéing	Tallow, lard, ghee, butter, suet	Avocado, olive or coconut oil	Ghee handles higher heat than butter; tallow is the best fryer fat.
Margarine & shortening	Baking fat	Butter, lard, tallow	-	Use cold butter for flaky toppings, softened for tender crumbs.
White sugar	Sweetness & browning	Raw honey, maple syrup, dates, ripe fruit	-	Use about 3/4 cup honey per 1 cup sugar and drop the oven 25°F.
Artificial sweeteners	Zero-calorie sweetness	Small amounts of honey or whole fruit	-	Salt makes sweet foods taste sweeter, so you need less.
Almond, oat & soy milk	Liquid for drinks & recipes	Whole raw or grass-fed milk, cream, kefir	Coconut milk	Swap 1:1 in any recipe.
Buttermilk	Tang & tenderizing	Kefir, or yogurt thinned with milk	-	Soak chicken or beef in kefir overnight before frying.
Milk chocolate & candy	Sweet treat	Honey-cream caramel, dates stuffed with cheese	Dark chocolate (85%+)	Flaky salt on top of anything sweet makes it taste richer.