



BRINGING nostalgia TO THE PLANT-BASED TABLE

Two generations of vegans share nostalgic recipes that anyone can make and everyone will eat

“I used to make a really killer cheese ball,” says Carolynne Kreutzer, a retired loan officer and mom of three. But after the consummate host developed lactose intolerance in the early 2000s, she decided to go vegan with encouragement from her kids, including daughter Karin Kreutzer, now senior art director for the Humane Society of the United States. Then she got to work veganizing longtime favorites—including the classic cheese ball.

Thankfully for today’s vegans and veg-curious, the days of suffering through jelly-like “cheese” and tasteless “burger” patties are long gone (remember the ’80s?). “The landscape of vegan food has absolutely exploded, which is so exciting and so fun,” says Alicia Bell, HSUS culinary program manager. The plethora of plant-based substitutes means there’s no reason for vegans to miss out on one of life’s greatest pleasures: making, eating and sharing purely-for-fun foods.

“You just use vegan cheese instead of regular cheese—and I have to tell you, my cheese ball has become famous,” says Carolynne. “Everybody loves it!”

Although the health benefits of eating unprocessed plants are undeniable—and the Kreutzers regularly enjoy salads and other whole vegetables—cauliflower steaks, carrot hot dogs and black bean burgers (though delicious) probably won’t put people in a party mood and may reinforce stereotypes about vegans living

a monastic existence. Plus, substitutes are likely better for you than you think—Bell notes that they’re often lower in saturated fat and higher in fiber than animal products.

“When we first make any change to our diet, it can be a struggle,” says Bell. “Food is so emotional; it’s so tied to memories, to satiety, all of that. We need to keep the foods familiar, just simply swapping out ingredients and knowing that you’re still satisfied, but you’re helping save animals and the planet at the same time.”

Carolynne recalls a family vacation to Yellowstone National Park a decade ago: “We were kind of assured we could get vegan food there,” she says with a laugh. “Oh, you can get vegan food there, all right—black bean burgers. For the whole week that we were there, every night, black bean burgers.” Needless to say, the experience didn’t help persuade her husband, Bill, to go vegan. (He has since passed but was a lifelong meat and potato lover.)

Carolynne, who lives with Karin, now uses modern substitutes to veganize American classics from chicken and rice casserole to chocolate pie, which she first veganized for her son, who went plant-based just after high school. “She’s always been such a nurturer, always making sure everybody’s fed,” says Karin, recalling her brother’s high school friends eating more often at the Kreutzers’ home than their own. “The second we know somebody’s coming over, her first question is, ‘So, what are we going to make?’ ”

Recipes by: Carolynne and Karin Kreutzer | *Story by:* Bethany W. Adams | *Photos by:* Meredith Lee | *Food styling and design:* Jessica Croce



THE CHEESE BALL

A friend shared the original dairy-based recipe with Carolynne in the '80s, but since veganizing the ball, it remains a fan favorite on holidays. Karin adds that it's best when you grate a block of plant-based cheese rather than using a pre-shredded variety. After the Kreutzers passed the recipe along, friends have discovered new ways to enjoy "the ball." One uses leftovers as a sandwich spread.

For those wary of "fake" animal products, Carolynne refers to a classic ad: "Just try it, you'll like it!"

FRANKIES IN BLANKIES

Invented by the British, pigs in blankets were popularized by cookbook author Delia Smith in the '90s and have been a ubiquitous party snack ever since. Coined by Karin, "frankies in blankies" keep the catchy name but spare the namesake in favor of plant-based frankfurters or sausages.

The cheese ball

Makes one extra-large ball or two medium balls

Ingredients

- 8 oz. shredded vegan pepper jack
- 8 oz. shredded vegan cheddar
- 8 oz. vegan cream cheese, room temperature (Tofutti preferred)
- ½ cup vegan sour cream
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 heaping tablespoon horseradish
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or slivered almonds (optional)

Instructions

1. Place first six ingredients in a large mixing bowl and thoroughly combine.
2. Roll into one large ball (or two small).
3. Spread nuts on a nonstick baking mat or parchment paper and carefully roll the cheese ball until covered.
4. Place the ball in a dish and serve with crackers and veggies.

Frankies in blankies

Ingredients

- 8 oz. tube of vegan crescent rolls (Pillsbury and most standard store brands are vegan)
- 1 package vegan hot dogs, frankfurters or sausages, each cut in half
- Coarse salt (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. On a nonstick mat or lightly floured surface, unroll crescent sheets and tear along the perforation. Slice each in half lengthwise for two smaller triangles. Place one half hot dog on the wider side of the triangle and roll up.
3. Transfer to a baking sheet and sprinkle with a small amount of coarse salt. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Seven-layer dip

Ingredients

- 16 oz. can refried beans (with no lard)
- 16 oz. vegan sour cream
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 1 cup each guacamole, chopped tomatoes and shredded lettuce/spinach
- ½ cup each chopped onions and olives
- Tortilla chips

Instructions

1. Spread refried beans on the bottom of a shallow glass dish.
2. Mix the taco seasoning with the sour cream and spread over the beans.
3. Layer guacamole, tomatoes, lettuce, olives and onions on top.
4. Serve with tortilla chips.

Buffalo chicken sliders

Ingredients

- 3 cups shredded Gardein Ultimate Chick'n Filets or any plant-based chicken
- ½ cup Buffalo sauce
- 12 brioche slider buns or dinner rolls
- 8 oz. shredded vegan mozzarella
- 1 bottle vegan ranch dressing
- 2 tablespoons unsalted vegan butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Prepared coleslaw

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. In a small bowl, combine the chicken and Buffalo sauce.
2. Place the bottom buns in a 9 by 13" baking dish. Layer on the ranch, cheese and chicken and cover with bun tops.
3. Melt butter with garlic and parsley and brush on buns. Bake for 10-12 minutes.
4. Carefully remove the bun tops. Add coleslaw before replacing the tops.
5. Serve warm.

SEVEN-LAYER DIP

Karin says this classic dip would've fit in perfectly at the Kreutzers' card table, where "for as long as I can remember," Carolynne held monthly games of Hearts with Karin on her lap and an abundance of "snacky things" in bowls. Other classic dips are easily veganized in the same way: Just swap out sour cream and mayonnaise for their animal-friendly counterparts.

BUFFALO CHICKEN SLIDERS

At sports parties, these colorful Buffalo "chicken" sliders are convenient to eat with one hand while holding a beer or gesticulating at the field with the other. Chicken is an easy meat to replicate with plants, and we're betting (no pun intended) that game spectators won't notice the difference.

MINI PIZZAS

The Kreutzers were the only family at the campground eating pizza from the grill instead of burgers—but for Karin, mini pizzas are a fond childhood memory and still in the family's meal rotation today. Easily customizable, kids will enjoy making their own at sleepovers and parties—or even while camping.

Mini pizzas

Ingredients

- One package English muffins, flatbread or pita bread
- Sauce of choice (Experiment with tomato sauce, pesto or barbecue sauce, or try Thai peanut or cashew alfredo sauce!)
- 8 oz. shredded vegan mozzarella or Miyoko's liquid mozzarella (recommended)
- Toppings of choice (Try plant-based pepperoni or sausage and veggies such as sun-dried tomatoes, mushrooms, olives, pepper, basil or anything you enjoy!)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Place flatbread, pita or English muffins face up on a baking sheet.
3. Spoon about 3-4 tablespoons sauce on each pizza. Sprinkle or pour on cheese and add toppings of your choice.
4. Bake for two minutes or until the cheese starts to turn golden brown.
5. Remove from the oven and enjoy hot!

Try this!

Karin swapped out tomato for barbecue sauce on her pizza (upper left) and topped it with sliced plant-based chicken tenders and red onions. Carolynne covered hers in BE-Hive vegan pepperoni and added banana peppers (immediate left).

Party toffee

Ingredients

- 40 saltine crackers (a little more than 1 sleeve)
- 1 cup vegan butter sticks (Miyoko's brand preferred)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 cups non-dairy chocolate chips
- Toppings of choice (chopped nuts, crushed mints or candy canes, sprinkles, crushed pretzels)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Line a large baking pan with a nonstick baking mat or parchment paper. Lay the crackers out in rows without overlapping, filling the entire pan.
3. Place butter and brown sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring as it melts. Once it boils, continue to gently stir the mixture for five minutes. Remove from heat and quickly pour over the crackers. Use a spatula to spread the toffee mixture over the crackers. Place the pan in the oven and bake for five minutes.
4. Remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Allow to sit for 1-2 minutes to melt, then use a spatula to spread the chocolate evenly. Sprinkle toppings over the melted chocolate while still warm.
5. Place the tray in the refrigerator or freezer for 30 minutes to harden. Once it's set, break it into pieces by hand and store it in an air-tight container in the fridge or freezer.

PARTY TOFFEE

"Once you start eating it, you can't stop," says Carolynne of party toffee, which she's served as a holiday treat for decades. Using just a few pantry staples, it's "easy to whip together last minute," notes Karin. "You just have to wait for it to harden. You have to be patient. That's the only downside!" Since veganizing the recipe, the pair have noticed that plant-based butter sticks, not tubs, work best.



FIRST SPREAD, PREPARED FOOD AND THE KREUTZERS, MEREDITH LEE/THE HSUS, BASH, REDHELGA/ISTOCK.COM, RECIPE BACKGROUND: KANAWA, STUDIO/ISTOCK.COM, COMPOSITE IMAGE, JESSICA CROCE/THE HSUS, SECOND SPREAD, PREPARED FOOD, MEREDITH LEE/THE HSUS, RECIPE BACKGROUND: KANAWA, STUDIO/ISTOCK.COM, COMPOSITE IMAGE, JESSICA CROCE/THE HSUS, THIRD SPREAD, PREPARED FOOD, MEREDITH LEE/THE HSUS, RECIPE BACKGROUND: KANAWA, STUDIO/ISTOCK.COM, COMPOSITE IMAGE, JESSICA CROCE/THE HSUS, BLUE NAPKIN, ALEXANDR ZHENZHROV/ISTOCK.COM, RED NAPKIN, A-S/ISTOCK.COM, BARBECUE SAUCE, THAIS CENEIVA/ISTOCK.COM, COMPOSITE IMAGE, JESSICA CROCE/THE HSUS, LUDMILA CHENETS/ISTOCK.COM, NUTRITIONAL YEAST, GEOFF BLAC/ISTOCK.COM, COMPOSITE IMAGE, JESSICA CROCE/THE HSUS

Plant-based made easy

Accidentally vegan treats

An easy way to determine whether something's vegan is to skip to the "allergens" list and look for milk, eggs, fish or shellfish—or simply look for cholesterol in the nutrition panel: Even 1% cholesterol means it isn't vegan. But you might be surprised by the number of ready-made products that are "accidentally vegan!"

- Arnold Bread and Cobblestone Mill baked goods (most products), Thomas' bagels
- BelVita crunchy breakfast biscuits and Nature Valley crunchy granola bars (most flavors)
- Betty Crocker Bac-O's bacon flavor bits
- Late July Sea Salt and Lime chips and Spicy Sweet Chili Doritos
- Most store-bought pastry and dough
- Most original flavor potato chips
- Oreos and unfrosted Pop-Tarts
- Sour Patch Kids (U.S. only), Swedish Fish and Twizzlers
- Most dark chocolate (check for dairy)

Fast food fixes

Convenient, cheap fast food used to be sadly off-limits for veg-heads, but thankfully, many chains have wised up to the demand for plant-based options. Here's a cheat sheet for when you need something quick and tasty.

- **Burger King:** Impossible Whopper (hold the mayo) and fries
- **Chipotle:** Sub meat with beans or plant-based sofritas and replace sour cream with guacamole
- **Dunkin':** English muffin, avocado toast, hash browns and non-dairy milk (almond, coconut and oat)
- **Starbucks:** Impossible sausage, oatmeal, all bagels, non-dairy milk (almond, coconut, oat and soy)
- **Subway:** Ask for Italian white bread and opt for a veggie patty or the Veggie Delite
- **Taco Bell:** Sub meat with black beans, refried beans or potatoes and order any item "fresco style" to replace cheese and sour cream with diced tomatoes



Nutritional yeast

adds savory flavor to sauces and soups. It also makes a great popcorn seasoning—just use in place of cheese powder for a nutrition boost (it's a sodium-free complete protein and contains fiber, antioxidants and B vitamins). Find it online or in the baking aisle of many grocery stores.

The average American vegan spares an estimated 116 animals each year—and reduces their water footprint by 37% over a lifetime.

