

# OIL-FREE COOKING RESOURCE GUIDE

*by Lifestyle & Culinary Medicine Team*

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## Why we stay away from oil:

1. Oil is a calorie dense vs. nutrient dense food. Meaning, you can consume many calories in only a very small amount without receiving many, if any nutrients. All oils are calorie dense, because they take a large amount of whole food, process them, and extract only the fat from the food. After extraction and processing, almost all of the nutrient value is stripped from the food. What you're left with is a high fat liquid. This is because the numerous and diverse phytonutrients in a whole plant work together in a symphony to provide the right path of absorption in the human body. When you extract just one of those nutrients or concentrate it through processing, it loses the ability to interact with several other nutrients through chemical processes and fails to optimally and correctly absorb and promote health in the body.
2. 1 tbsp of cold-pressed olive oil is 119 calories, has 13.5 g Fat, half of which come from saturated fat. To put this into perspective, our fajita recipe is around 130 calories and 4g Fat per fajita. If you sautéed the veggies in 1 tbsp olive oil, baked or sautéed the soy curls with 1 tbsp olive oil (most people use much more than this), then you're now adding around 4.5 g Fat per fajita, and 40 calories bringing 1 fajita up to 170 calories and 8.5 g Fat.
3. Oil also slows blood flow and causes damage to the inner lining of your blood vessels leading to disease. It also promotes the growth of "bad" bacteria in the gut that release inflammatory chemicals leading to diseases of inflammation (i.e., heart disease, cancer, etc).
4. Look at it like this, our internal organs including our muscles, brain and blood are all about 85% water. We know oil and water don't mix because when you pour oil into a cup of water, they separate as oil is hydrophobic. Now imagine your body as this cup of water. Consuming oil (pouring it into the cup of water) hinders several mechanisms of the body that promote absorption and excretion to facilitate important body functions. This causes fat cells build up on the outside of the pancreas which hinders the absorption and release of insulin and glucose.

## Important tips for ALL non-stick pans

1. Do not use metal utensils, as this will damage your pan and cause premature deterioration
2. Do not scrub with metal brillo pads. The best way to clean is with warm water, the soft side of a sponge, a tiny bit of dish soap if necessary.

## Best Pans for Oil-Free Sautéing:

### 1. Ceramic Coated

**Best For:** Sautéing and cooking **veggies** with no oil

**Not best for:** cooking foods with high protein. (e.g., tofu scramble, tempeh bacon, veggie burgers, dry-fried tofu etc.)

**Best Brand:** [GreenPan](#). It's a little pricier, but will last 4-5 years if treated properly.

## 2. Non-Stick PFOA Free

**Best for:** Cooking **high protein foods** like tofu scrambles, veggie burgers, tempeh bacon, soy curls etc. You can also cook veggies as well, but a ceramic pan works best for this.

**Best brand:** [Calphalon](#) and [Mokika](#). We personally prefer Calphalon for the most bang for your buck. Other non-stick pans are costly or use a harmful chemical called PFOA, which is a harmful chemical on many non-stick pans, that liquefies, turns into gas, and is absorbed into food, Calphalon uses anodization, which is a process that changes the structure of aluminum and is safe to use in cooking.

## Best Pans for Oil-Free Baking and “Frying”

### 1. Air-Fryer

**Best for:** EVERYTHING!! You can put almost anything in this awesome kitchen tool. From roasted chickpeas, to french fries, to soy curls, tofu and tempeh. There are typically settings on the air fryer that go up to 450 degrees and around 20 mins. Most things can be cooked perfectly at 375 degrees for around 15 mins. The device has a perforated basket that allows hot air to circulate evenly creating a crispy fried texture without oil. Clean-up is so easy, and it’s pretty much foolproof.

**Pro tip:** don’t put a wrap or naan in here, it will catch on fire.

**Best brand:** Farberware is one of the lower priced air fryers, but still great quality. You can find it at Walmart for around \$80. [T-Fal Actifry](#) is a little pricier (around \$179). The reason is because it has a built-in flip feature. You won’t have to worry about checking your food half way through to stir around or flip, as it has this technology built right in.

### 2. Silicone Baking Mats and pans

**Best for:** Any kind of oven baking or roasting, such as, roasting veggies, cakes, cookies etc. You place them over any metal baking pan that you own. No oil or spray oil is required. They are cleaned easily and are friendly to our environment. The mats cost around \$7 for a 2-pack on Amazon compared to \$10 for a roll of parchment paper, which is eco-friendly compared to parchment paper. They come in a variety of sizes for use in just about any pan. Good for temperatures up to 450 degrees. They are easy to clean, even when roasting veggies in balsamic vinegar which tends to burn and get sticky. They also come in loaf pans, muffin pans (jumbo, regular and mini).

**Best Brand:**

[Kitzini](#) or [AmazonBasics](#) are the only ones we’ve tried, and both work great. There are several other brands out there.