

# Healthy substitutions for baking and cooking

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A person may have to change an ingredient to avoid a food allergy, or he or she may swap something out to make a dish more nutritious. Some substitutions can change the texture or even taste of the overall recipe, as no substitution can mimic the original ingredient exactly. However, a home cook will often find the results are acceptable, and may even prefer them to the “real” thing.

**Original ingredient:** White flour

**Substitution:** Whole wheat flour, nut flour

White flour lacks many nutrients because the grain has been largely stripped of its most important parts before being ground. Whole wheat flour has extra fiber that aids in digestion and can lower risk for certain diseases. Those with a gluten intolerance can use nut flours, like almond flour. Whole wheat flour and nut flours are denser than white flour, so you may need to experiment with 3/4 cup to 1 cup of white flour ratios in recipes.

**Original ingredient:** Sugar

**Substitution:** Applesauce

Sugar is the foundation of many baked goods, but too much sugar provides empty calories and can contribute to various illnesses if eaten in large quantities. Swapping one cup of unsweetened applesauce for one cup of sugar can provide sweetness with more health benefits, such as added fiber and vitamins.

**Original ingredient:** Oil or butter

**Substitution:** Fruit or vegetable puree



Try adding pureed carrot, banana, pumpkin, or apples to recipes to boost moisture. These ingredients also add extra flavor and nutrients. The ratio is generally one-to-one for the replacement. However, cooks may want to experiment to find the best ratio for their recipes.

**Original ingredient:** Buttermilk

**Substitution:** Milk and lemon juice

If you don't have buttermilk on hand or if you feel that it is too high in calories, mix enough milk (low fat if desired) with enough lemon juice or light vinegar to reach 1 cup.

**Original ingredient:** Water

**Substitution:** Stock

Make a batch of vitamin- and nutrient-rich vegetable stock to use with foods that are boiled, such as pastas and rices. The stock will add flavor and nutrition.

**Original ingredient:** Egg

**Substitution:** Vinegar, baking powder and liquid (baking) or egg substitute (cooking)

When baking, 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder plus 1 tablespoon vinegar plus 1 tablespoon of a liquid can replace an egg in the recipe if you're avoiding eggs.

**Original ingredient:** Sour cream

**Substitution:** Plain Greek yogurt

Greek yogurt, with its natural helpful probiotic bacteria, can be a healthy substitution for sour cream in dips, dressings and other recipes that call for sour cream or even mayonnaise.

Food substitutions can help people customize recipes to fit their dietary needs. People can experiment with various ingredients to develop delicious meals.