

Perfectly Different

THANKSGIVING SIDES

A Twist on Tradition



By Ale Graf

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INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Ale Graf.

My name is Alejandra Graf, and I'm the creative mind behind the award-winning blog Piloncillo&Vainilla, which is in Spanish, and AleCooks, which is in English. I am originally from Mexico, but I have been living in the United States with my family for over a decade now. I am married to an American and we have three beautiful children together – Santiago, Sofia, and Romina.

I'm a published cookbook-author and successful food blogger who has been featured in The New York Times.

In 2021 Penguin Random House published my cookbook, Yo Cocino Latino, in Spanish. The NBC morning show, TeleMundo, Siempre Mujer, and Reforma, among many others, featured my cookbook.

Piloncillo & Vainilla | AleCooks' mission is to showcase, through mouth-watering food photography and videos, that eating healthy and vegan can be both delicious and easy.

I connect with mothers worldwide to help them introduce healthier foods and products to their families.

I've motivated thousands of women to prepare tasty, quick, plant-based, nutritious meals for their children.

My recipes, healthy lifestyle recommendations, and insights resonate with Americans, U.S. Latinos, and Hispanic women.

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As a Mexican, Alejandra can affirm that their culture's most expressive love language is the art of nourishing one another through the gift of food. The table and the kitchen are the heart of their gatherings, where they reconnect, share stories, and celebrate their lives.



1

SWEET AND SPICY BRUSSELS SPROUTS

These roasted sweet and spicy Brussels sprouts are absolutely delicious. Every time I make them, I have to double the recipe because they are so popular. The sauce is a unique combination of sweet and spicy flavors that are incredibly satisfying and make you want to keep eating.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups halved brussels sprouts
- 4 tablespoons olive oil or avocado

Sweet and spicy sauce

- 2 tablespoons apricot jam
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Sriracha
- 1 pinch of salt

To finish

- chopped cilantro
- chopped chives
- lemon juice
- Salt.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425-450°F
2. Cut brussels sprouts in half and place on a cookie sheet. Add the oil and salt, mix and put in the oven for 15 minutes.
3. Turn every 5 minutes to make them roast evenly.
4. To make the sauce, mix everything in a bowl and taste.
5. Take the sprouts out of the oven, empty the sauce on top and mix until all are covered.
6. Return to the oven for 5 more minutes or until you see that the sauce begins to boil.
7. Scoop out the cabbages on a platter and finish with cilantro, chives, sesame seeds, and freshly squeezed lemon juice



2

POTATO AND SWEET POTATO MASH WITH VEGAN CHIPOTLE QUESO

This mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes recipe with vegan chipotle queso is delicious and very easy to prepare. It is creamy, spicy and very flavorful. Perfect side dish for the Holidays or any weeknight dinner.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large potatoes cut into pieces
- 2 large sweet potatoes cut into pieces
- 2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons of butter vegan butter
- 1/2 cup to 3/4 cup of water from which the potatoes were cooked or almond milk or rice milk

Chipotle vegan cheese

- 1 cup unsalted and unroasted cashews raw
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon of chipotle chile in adobo
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cover the pieces of potato and sweet potato with enough water and a teaspoon of salt. Leave covered until fully cooked.
2. When fully cooked, drain them the water (saving about a cup of water), mash them and mix with the rest of the ingredients.
3. Blend the cashews with the garlic powder, the chipotle chili pepper in adobo, the pinch of salt and half a cup of water. Blend until creamy.
4. Serve the vegan chipotle queso on top of the puree.
5. Use leftovers to make crispy tacos or tostadas.



3

EASY VEGAN INSTANT POT MASHED POTATOES

This instant pot mashed potato is super easy and always looks good. This mashed potato has no milk or butter and is creamy and perfect.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 large potatoes Russet or yukon
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ground black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Peel the potatoes and put them in the pot of the Instant-Pot. Add the olive oil, garlic cloves, salt, and pepper. Cover with water.
2. Turn on the pot on the steam function for 8 minutes.
3. When the cycle ends, remove the steam manually. Take the potatoes and garlic out of the pot and mash with a potato masher until it has the consistency you want.
4. Check for salt and pepper. Serve with chopped parsley and a drizzle of olive oil.



4

THE EASIEST-TO-MAKE CRANBERRY SAUCE: ROASTED CRANBERRY SAUCE

This roasted cranberry sauce is more than a side dish—it's a flavor-packed condiment that brings holiday magic to any meal. Whether you're serving it for Thanksgiving, gifting a jar to friends, or sneaking a spoonful straight from the bowl, it's a recipe that'll quickly become a favorite.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz 340 g fresh cranberries (frozen can also be used)
- 1 medium lemon zested and juiced
- 1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves optional
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch of ground allspice
- Pinch of salt
- Optional: 1/4 cup chopped pecans or walnuts for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Toss cranberries with lemon zest, lemon juice, brown sugar, olive oil, thyme (if using), cinnamon, and allspice. Spread them out on the baking sheet in a single layer. If you wish, you can mix everything in a small bowl and then pour it over the cranberries.
3. Roast the cranberries for 20–25 minutes, stirring halfway through. The cranberries will burst and caramelize as they cook.
4. Remove from the oven and use the back of a spoon to mash the cranberries to your desired consistency. Transfer to a serving dish.
5. Top with more thyme leaves and chopped nuts for a pop of color and crunch, if you'd like.



5

HOMEMADE CRANBERRY SAUCE WITH ORANGE

This recipe for cranberry sauce is so easy and delicious to make, you'll never go back to the canned one.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds fresh cranberries
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 clove
- 1 orange zest and juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the ingredients in a pot over medium heat and stir until the sugar dissolves and the cranberries are cooked.
2. It takes about 15 minutes to be ready.



6

VEGAN STUFFING WITH LEEKS AND KALE

This recipe for vegan stuffing with kale and leeks is delicious. It is creamy, flavorful and crunchy and almost like crouton like bread topping.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup onion chopped
- 3 garlic cloves sliced
- 1 celery stalk finely chopped
- 3-4 small leeks only the white and light green, washed and sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup white wine or vegetable broth
- 10 oz kale washed and chopped

Roux

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or vegan butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk rice or almond
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon thyme or Provence herbs
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Bread

- 1 baguette cut into large pieces
- Olive Oil
- Salt
- Pepper



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Cut the baguette into equal size chunks and put it in a bowl. Add the olive oil, salt, and pepper. Mix with your hands and set aside.
3. Add the olive oil, onion, and garlic in a large skillet. Leave for three minutes and add the leeks and celery.
- 4.
5. Leave until all the vegetables are completely soft, and they are beginning to stick a little bit at the bottom of the pan.
6. Add the wine, loosen the pieces of vegetables that stuck to the pan, and let it evaporate. Add the kale and salt.
7. Leave until the kale is incorporated, but do not let them completely wilt.
8. Put this mixture of vegetables on a baking dish and set aside.
9. Clean the pan you are using with a paper towel.
10. Put the olive oil or butter, and as soon as it melts, add the flour. Do not stop whisking, and when it begins to smell nutty and delicious. Be careful not to burn it.
11. Add the milk. Do not stop whisking, it will thicken quickly. Add the mustard, pepper, salt, and herbs. Test and adjust if necessary seasoning. Pour over the vegetables and mix well.
12. Cover with the pieces of bread and bake for 15 minutes or until the bread is golden brown.

7

KALE SALAD WITH ROASTED SWEET POTATOES AND MAPLE DIJON DRESSING

This salad isn't just another side dish—it's a nutrient-dense, flavor-packed recipe that can stand alone as a satisfying meal. From the smoky roasted vegetables to the bright, tangy dressing, every bite is a burst of deliciousness.

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad:

- 4 cups kale stems removed, chopped, and massaged with a bit of olive oil
- 2 medium sweet potatoes diced
- 1 15 oz can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chipotle powder
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt to taste
- 2 tablespoons pepitas pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons sunflower seeds
- ⅓ cup crumbled cotija cheese

For the Maple Dijon Dressing:

- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

Roast the Sweet Potatoes and Chickpeas

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, toss the diced sweet potatoes and chickpeas with olive oil, garlic powder, chipotle powder, and a pinch of salt.
3. Spread them evenly on the baking sheet and roast for 20–25 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden and slightly crispy.

Make the Maple Dijon Dressing

1. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together Dijon mustard, maple syrup, white wine vinegar, olive oil, salt, and black pepper. Adjust seasoning to taste and set aside.
2. Prep the Kale. Place the chopped kale in a large salad bowl. Drizzle with a bit of olive oil and massage the leaves with your hands for 2–3 minutes until they soften and turn darker green.
3. Assemble the Salad. Top the massaged kale with the roasted sweet potatoes and chickpeas, pepitas, sunflower seeds, and crumbled cotija cheese.
4. Drizzle the maple Dijon dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.

8

ROASTED DELICATA SQUASH WITH MAPLE CHIPOTLE GLAZE AND PECAN CRUMBLE

This roasted delicata squash with maple chipotle glaze and pecan crumble is a must-try recipe for the colder months. It's simple to make, packed with flavor, and sure to become a staple on your dinner table.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 delicata squash
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tsp chipotle powder or 1 tbsp chipotle in adobo sauce for extra heat
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp pecans crushed
- 3 tbsp coarse bread crumbs
- 5-10 fresh thyme sprigs

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup. Slice the delicata squash in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds, and cut into thin half-moon slices.
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together olive oil, maple syrup, chipotle powder (or chipotle in adobo sauce), garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Add the squash slices to the bowl and toss until well-coated with the glaze. Arrange the slices in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet.
4. Roast the squash for 15-20 minutes, flipping halfway through, until tender and caramelized.
5. Add the crushed pecans and breadcrumbs to the leftover glaze in the bowl and mix well. Spread this mixture onto a separate baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 1-2 minutes, until golden brown and crisp. Keep an eye on it to prevent burning.
6. Once the squash is roasted, transfer it to a serving platter. Sprinkle the pecan crumble over the top and garnish with fresh thyme.
7. Serve warm as a side dish or a light main course. Pair it with a crisp green salad or roasted protein for a complete meal.



9

ROASTED RAINBOW CARROTS WITH CILANTRO PEPITA DRESSING

These rainbow-roasted carrots with cilantro pepita dressing are perfect for Thanksgiving or any other friends or family gathering. The color is so beautiful and eye-catching, and the contrast with the cilantro pepita dressing takes it to another level in color and flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds rainbow carrots peeled
- 1 tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

Cilantro pepita dressing

- 1 cup cilantro
- 1 serrano pepper
- 1/4 cup pepitas
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the carrots in a single layer on a baking sheet.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
4. Put in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

Cilantro pepita dressing

1. Add the ingredients to a food processor or blender. Blend until creamy, taste and adjust the flavor if necessary.



10

SPICY ROASTED CARROTS WITH SALSA MACHA

Sweet, smoky, and just the right amount of spicy, this Spicy Roasted Carrots recipe is the ultimate side dish to elevate any meal. Tossed in a flavorful macha mayo, roasted to tender perfection, and topped with crumbled cotija cheese and fresh mint, these carrots are as vibrant as they are delicious. Perfect for cozy dinners or as a colorful addition to your Thanksgiving table, this dish is easy to make, full of bold flavors, and guaranteed to impress. Whether you're a fan of salsa macha or just looking for a new way to enjoy carrots, this recipe will quickly become a favorite!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb 450 g rainbow carrots, peeled and halved lengthwise Note: If carrots are thick, cut them into quarters for even roasting.
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Salt or more to taste
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise Swap: Use plant-based mayo for a vegan option.
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons salsa macha store-bought or homemade Adjust to taste; more for extra heat.
- 1/4 cup crumbled cotija cheese Swap: Substitute with feta or queso fresco.
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint for garnish Swap: Use cilantro or parsley if preferred.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C).
2. Prepare the Macha Mayo. In a large bowl, mix, 1 heaping tablespoon mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 2–3 tablespoons salsa macha and stir until the mixture is smooth and fully combined.
3. Toss the Carrots. Add the peeled and halved carrots to the bowl with the macha mayo. Toss until the carrots are evenly coated. Use a slotted spoon or kitchen tongs to transfer the carrots to a baking sheet, leaving the extra macha mayo mixture in the bowl to use for serving.
4. Roast the Carrots. Spread the carrots out on the baking sheet in a single layer, ensuring they don't overlap. Roast for 15-20 minutes, tossing halfway through. Keep an eye on them during the last 5 minutes to prevent burning. The carrots are ready when they're tender and slightly caramelized.
5. Assemble the Dish. Transfer the roasted carrots to a serving platter. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup crumbled cotija cheese. Garnish with chopped fresh mint or cilantro. Add a final drizzle of salsa macha, if desired.
6. Serve the leftover macha mayo in a small bowl and place it on the side of the carrots.

11

SOFT AND FLUFFY EGGLESS DINNER ROLLS RECIPE

These eggless dinner rolls are soft, fluffy, and incredibly easy to make. Whether you're serving them with a hearty soup, your favorite pasta, or as part of a holiday feast, they're sure to be a hit. Try them today, and enjoy the magic of homemade bread, no eggs required!

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast 1 packet
- 1 cup warm milk or plant-based milk for a dairy-free version, around 110°F
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 4 tbsp melted butter or plant-based butter
- 1/2 tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Activate the Yeast.** In a small bowl, combine warm milk and sugar. Sprinkle the yeast on top, stir, and let it sit for about 5-10 minutes until it becomes frothy. This step ensures your yeast is active and will help the rolls rise perfectly.
2. **Mix the Dough.** In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Pour in the melted butter and yeast mixture. Stir until a soft, sticky dough forms.
3. **Knead the Dough.** Transfer the dough onto a floured surface and knead it for about 8 to 10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic. If the dough feels too sticky, sprinkle in a little extra flour, one tablespoon at a time. Alternatively, you can use a stand mixer fitted with a hook attachment.
4. **Let It Rise** Place the kneaded dough in a greased bowl, cover with a damp cloth, and let it rise in a warm, draft-free place for 1-1.5 hours, or until it doubles in size. It takes a while, the dough is heavy.
5. **Shape the Rolls.** Punch down the dough to release air bubbles, then divide it into 12-15 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball and place them in a greased baking dish, spaced slightly apart.
6. **Second Rise.** Cover the rolls with a cloth and let them rise for another 30-45 minutes, or until they've doubled in size again.
7. **Bake.** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Bake the rolls for 15-18 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown.
8. **Finish with Butter.** Brush the tops with melted butter immediately after taking them out of the oven for extra softness and a shiny finish.



12

VEGAN CORNBREAD

Our Homestyle Vegan Cornbread brings the nostalgic flavor of traditional cornbread to plant-based kitchens, with its warm, fluffy texture and rich taste—no dairy or eggs needed. Made with simple, wholesome ingredients, this easy recipe is perfect for pairing with vegan butter, a drizzle of maple syrup, or a hearty chili. It's the ultimate comfort food that adds a homemade touch to any meal while satisfying every craving.

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup medium-grind cornmeal
- 1 1/4 cup all-purpose flour use gluten-free if preferred
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar or adjust to taste
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsweetened plant milk soy, almond, or oat work well
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
- 1/4 cup silken tofu
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil or melted vegan butter

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine the plant milk with apple cider vinegar or lemon juice, stir, and set aside to create a vegan buttermilk.
2. In a bowl, whisk together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. In a large bowl, whisk the silken tofu until creamy. Add the oil and sugar, mixing until well integrated.
4. Add the dry ingredients into the wet ones. Add the milk with vinegar; stir until just combined, careful not to overmix.
5. Pour the batter into the skillet or a greased 8-inch square baking pan.
6. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the edges are golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cornbread comes out clean or with a few crumbs..





**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!!**

Ale Graf