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Vegan Enchilada Casserole

January 13, 2016 | By Rhea Yablon Kennedy | Hazon



Natasha Rosenstock Nadel wants you and your family to follow a simple, delicious plant-based diet that consists of whole foods.

"I'm starting the revolution and I want you to join me and start a revolution where you live," Nadel told workshop attendees at the [Hazon Food Conference](#) at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in late December.

"I'm a journalist, not a nutritionist," the Washington, DC-based writer and mother of two informed her audience, "but I've done 10 years of research so you don't have to."

Accordingly, Nadel includes a list of resources — from case studies and reports to books and documentary films — in her new book, "[Healthy Family, Healthy You: The Healthy Mama's Guide to feeding your family well — simply and sanely!](#)"

Nadel is as meticulous about the quality of her recipes as she is about her information. For her companion volume, "[The Healthy Family, Healthy You Cookbook: The Healthy Mama's Guide to simple, healthy versions of your family's favorite foods,](#)" she tested every recipe multiple times. Perhaps most importantly, Nadel said that her children and their compatriots enjoy her menus, which emphasize fruits and vegetables and are free of meat, dairy and eggs. Kids even inspired many of the dishes. ("We need to let our kids have leadership in this," Nadel told workshop attendees. "It has a huge influence.")

Some Jewish dishes pose a particular challenge to Nadel's whole-foods and plant-based diet plan. But "Healthy You" recipes such as a vegan cholent build a bridge between cultural traditions and healthful cuisine.

One widely appealing main dish from the cookbook is Nadel's vegan cheese enchilada casserole.

"After I gave up cheese, I thought I was never going to experience cheese enchilada yumminess again," she wrote in the introduction to the recipe. "I couldn't believe when I figured out this fantastic substitute for the unhealthy version I used to love."

After four non-vegan taste testers gave it their seal of approval, Nadel knew she had a winner. She says that most people don't realize it's dairy-free.

The dish includes a "cheesy" sauce made with cashews that's layered with sprouted-grain corn tortillas and generous helpings of greens and beans. It is quick to prepare, with a baking time of just 15 minutes.

So let the revolution begin. And if you need help starting yours, Nadel said, she's happy to come give a workshop.

Vegan Cheese Enchilada Casserole



Image Courtesy of Natasha Rosenstock Nadel

Serves 6-8

Vegan Cheese Sauce

- 1 cup cashews, soaked in water for at least an hour
- 1 roasted red pepper (can be from a jar)
- ½ cup nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup almond milk

Enchilada Casserole

- 1 small yellow onion, diced (approximately 1 cup)
- 2 large garlic cloves, diced
- ¾ to 1 cup of water, divided
- 2 cups kale, chopped
- 3 14- or 15-ounce cans beans (black, kidney and/or pinto), rinsed and drained
- 2 10-ounce cans enchilada sauce
- 9 to 12 small sprouted organic corn tortillas (available in the refrigerated section of health food stores)
- 1 batch Vegan Cheese Sauce (recipe above)

Cooked brown rice for serving.

- 1) Heat oven to 350° F.
- 2) Prepare the Vegan Cheese Sauce: Combine ingredients in blender and puree.
- 3) Grease a 9 x 13 ceramic dish with olive oil.
- 4) Place the onion and garlic in a medium-large sauté pan in ¼ cup of water. Cook on medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring often. Add another ¼ cup water to the pan (if needed) to keep the onions from sticking. Let the onion and garlic cook for another two minutes. Meanwhile, chop the kale.
- 5) Add the kale to the pan, along with another ¼ cup of water. Cook another 5 minutes until onions are translucent, kale is wilted and water is absorbed.
- 6) Add the beans and enchilada sauce to the pan and combine. Then, either take half of the mixture and pulse a few times in a blender (leave it chunky), or use an immersion blender and blend half of the bean mixture in the pan. Then mix the blended and non-blended bean mixtures together.
- 7) Place 4 corn tortillas on the bottom of the casserole dish (they will overlap). Cover the tortillas with half the bean mixture from the pan and smooth out. Add a third of the cheese sauce in a thin layer on top of the bean mixture. Be sure to spread it out evenly.
- 8) Lay 3-4 more tortillas on top of the bean mixture, covering the whole width of the dish. Add the other half of the bean mixture and smooth out again. Add another third of the cheese sauce, in a thin layer, as before. Lay 3-4 tortillas over that second layer of beans. Then spread the last third of the cheese sauce, in a thin and even layer.
- 9) Bake the casserole, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Serve with the brown rice.

Recipe adapted from "The Healthy Family, Healthy You Cookbook" by Natasha Rosenstock Nadel (2015).

Rhea Yablon Kennedy teaches at Gallaudet University and lives in Washington, DC. Follow her on Twitter @RheaYKennedy. Her website is [RheaKennedy.com](#).

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