

Which Plant-Based Milk Should You Cook With?

Your guide to choosing the right alternative milk for the recipe at hand.

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We're living in a golden age of plant-based milks. From oat to pea to hemp to almond, those wanting a non-dairy alternative to the creamy staple have never had so many choices. But just as you're choosy about which goes in your morning latte, when it comes to cooking or baking not all milks are created equal. Here's what you need to know about cooking and baking with some of the popular alternatives.

How to Use Plant-Based Milks in Recipes



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First things first, most non-dairy milks can be swapped cup for cup in most recipes. Double check the label to see whether you've bought sweetened or unsweetened as sweetened versions may impact the taste of some recipes.

Oat Milk: The current darling of the plant-based milk world, creamy, tasty oat milk is a versatile cooking and baking ingredient. With a flavor that won't overpower, you can use it in baking recipes such as [whoopie pies](#), and also for heartier dishes like [mac and cheese](#). Add in coconut oil to thicken it up to a heavy cream consistency to make [ice cream](#).

Almond Milk: Almond milk doesn't play well with savorier dishes because of its inherently sweet flavor and its consistency makes using it for pie fillings a challenge. But you can use it as a cow's milk substitute for many desserts and baked good recipes including [pancakes](#), [pound cakes](#), [muffins](#), and [biscuits](#).

Hemp Milk: Honestly, you don't want to cook with hemp milk. While it's got a nice texture, you'll notice its strong nutty flavor in most dishes.

Coconut: Remember there are two versions of coconut milk, each with very different consistencies and nutrient profiles. You have the beverage found in the dairy and plant-based milk aisle and the canned version, which are similar in texture to a condensed milk. Use the beverage from the refrigerated dairy aisle for your coffee drinks and [smoothies](#), and the canned coconut milks for recipes that call for something thick and rich, such as ice cream and [curry](#). Keep in mind, the milk will add a coconut flavor to the dish.

Flax Milk: Not as easy to find depending on your market, you can sub it, for cow's milk in any recipe where the milk isn't being used to thicken the dish. For instance, it's not going to work for a chocolate ganache or in Alfredo sauce but will work for a [coffee cake](#).

Pea Milk: We were skeptical of this one at first too, but this milk made from yellow peas (it's not green) is another versatile non-dairy milk. It works in your coffee but you can also use it to make ice cream, mac and cheese, muffin and [cake batters](#), and more sweet and savory dishes.

Rice Milk: This is another challenging alternative milk, simply because most rice milks are thin. If it's the milk you normally have on hand, you could try fattening it up by adding sunflower oil or coconut oil to use in sweet recipes or use it as-is for [glazes](#) where rice milk's natural thinness will work to your advantage.

Soy: Probably the easiest alternative milk to use when baking as it has a similar texture, protein and fat count to dairy milk. It holds together well when heated and will even work well in [custards](#), which is one of the hardest things to make without traditional cow's milk.