



Introducing Forks Flex Recipes: Why Some Forks Over Knives Recipes Now Include Optional Oil

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Since our founding in 2011, Forks Over Knives has followed the guidance of whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) pioneers Caldwell B. Esselstyn, M.D.; T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.; and Dean Ornish, M.D., who advise heart disease patients to avoid all added oils, even olive oil, because they are highly refined, calorie-dense, and stripped of most nutrients other than fat. Until now, Forks Over Knives recipes have always been oil-free.

But [not all WFPB experts agree](#) that it's necessary to avoid oil to reap the benefits of the diet. We also recognize that a strict no-oil stance can deter newcomers from adopting or even trying a healthy plant-based lifestyle. Our mission is to help people embrace a diet rich in whole plant-based foods—whether or not that includes small amounts of oil.

What Are Forks Flex Recipes?

To keep in step with that mission, we are introducing [Forks Flex Recipes](#) into our recipe collection. Like all FOK recipes, every Forks Flex Recipe is built around whole or minimally processed plant-based ingredients. The difference is that a Forks Flex Recipe will include a modest amount of *optional* oil, usually extra-virgin olive oil. The choice is yours: Exercise the oil option, or leave it out. The oil-free version will be lighter, but both versions will be vegan and cholesterol-free, with nutritionally conservative levels of fat and sodium.

What Is Forks Over Knives' Current Guidance on Added Oils in the Diet?

The guiding principle of [the WFPB diet](#) is a focus on whole (or minimally processed) plant-based foods. Oil is not a health food and not essential to a healthy diet. For people with heart disease or major risk factors such as hypertension, high LDL cholesterol, diabetes, or obesity, avoiding or minimizing added oil [is beneficial](#). For others, research suggests a small amount of extra-virgin olive oil or other vegetable oil is unlikely to be harmful. That being said, oils remain the world's most calorie-dense foods, so replacing them with whole foods is always a win.

