



Plant-Based Diaries Week 1: Look, Ma—No Oil!

By Lucie Monk Carter
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I'll eat breakfast foods at any time of day but rarely manage to before 10 a.m. I'm not the type to sleep in—if I leave home with my hair wet, I dry out to look like Mozart's ruffled sister—but often I use those valuable pre-work hours to soak in the tub, take my time with a book or article, and change outfits after my toddler hugs me with doting banana hands.

But mornings when there is time (these are usually referred to as “weekends”), I sure love to flip flapjacks. Readers the world over, please note that like biscuits, pudding, and chips, the British also define flapjacks differently than we Americans do—to them, a flapjack is a tray-baked oat bar. For the purposes of this blog, I am talking about a good old-fashioned pancake.

Or am I? This week, Forks Over Knives had me mashing bananas, using chickpea liquid instead of farm-fresh eggs, swapping out dairy for almond milk, and for some reason tossing sparkling water into the mix. These are not the same pancakes I watched bubble and brown on my grandmother's griddle. But still I'm infatuated.

My biggest concern here was the lack of oil in both the batter and on the pan. I feared it would make clean-up difficult. “This is going to be really hard for you, I'm sorry,” I told my husband as the griddle heated up with no encouraging crackle.

Well, great news, Andy, there was barely a speck on the pan when I was done. Each disc of batter aerated and began to crisp immediately upon hitting the heated surface, thanks to that sparkling water. The real trick here, I learned after a pancake or two, is to wait for golden edges before you flip.

Did they taste like pancakes, those buttery, sweet circles

of heaven? Actually, more than anything, [these Banana Pancakes](#) tasted like bananas. It's the closest I've come to molecular gastronomy, which examines the chemical transformation of ingredients that occurs with cooking. I scattered my pancakes with fresh blueberries, the one fruit my daughter can't seem to tolerate. She and my husband both enjoyed theirs with a drizzle of maple syrup.



Carrot Cake Overnight Oats

What's there to be said about making [Carrot Cake Overnight Oats](#)? All the work was done ahead of time, with layers of dates, oats, shredded carrot, spices, nuts, and more mashed banana heading into the fridge the afternoon before. I just grabbed the jar from the fridge and spooned out our sweet second breakfast. I'd seen, touched, and chopped each element as I put in the jar but could never have imagined how richly they would all intertwine. Mae, my toddler, is less enamored of a medley of flavors than I am—she's more of a one-ingredient-at-a-time kind of gal—but she managed a bite or two. We're all broadening our horizons.

Editor's Note: This month is the second annual Forks Over Knives Fresh Start Challenge, our free 21-day program for adopting a plant-based diet one meal at a time. Food writer Lucie Monk Carter is taking the challenge, and we've asked her to document her experiences with whole-food, plant-based cooking and eating in this series.

Looking for practical support on your whole-food, plant-based journey? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.