

snackconscious™

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

# Building the Vegan Pantry

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## A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE FLAVOURS, TEXTURES AND NUTRITION OF THE VEGAN PANTRY

Building a well thought out, well organized pantry is important for any home that wants to eat healthy and be creative with their meals. For a vegan, it's critical. I love to cook and I love to organize so it came pretty easy to me (my spices were already in alphabetical order after all). What I've discovered is that many vegans struggle on what to stock and how the items impact your health. So, I put together the following guide to building the ultimate vegan pantry. I want to ensure you have the basics, but also some of those more rare grains, flavourful seeds, and unique spice combinations.

I've broken it down into five categories:

- 1. Nuts and seeds**
- 2. Grains and flour**
- 3. Canned goods**
- 4. Oils and spices**
- 5. Other**

# Nuts & Seeds



# Nuts and seeds

I KNOW SOME OF THESE ARE NOT "OFFICIALLY" NUTS, THEY ARE LEGUMES, BUT WE ALL CALL THEM NUTS SO THAT'S HOW I'VE CLASSIFIED THEM.

## MACADAMIA NUTS

I consider this to be the secret weapon in my pantry. Just 10 of these nuts have about 18g of good fat (monounsaturated), helping you to power through your day. Monounsaturated fats are pretty well known and accepted nowadays as healthy. There's many studies that show the health benefits linked to these, including improved insulin resistance and better HDL/LDL cholesterol levels. I use macadamia in my homemade bars, trail mix, and will throw 5-10 into a shake instead of pumpkin seeds.

## BRAZIL NUTS

The Brazil nut tree is among the largest of trees in the Amazon. It may live for 500 years or more and according to some authorities often reaches an age of 1,000 years. What more do you need to know to put this nut on your list. They are actually a seed contained in a pod, so they are technically not even a nut. In addition to being the best selenium food source in the world, Brazil nuts have zero cholesterol and a whopping 14g of protein in every 100g serving.

## CASHEWS

The number one use for cashews in my kitchen is to make cheese like sauces. I have proudly fooled many people with

my dairy free lasagna. Cashews also make a great base for protein balls and toast nicely for cheese platters or to top Asian stir frys. Dairy free desserts often call for soaked cashews. Although high in carbs, cashews, like most other nuts and seeds have that big hit of healthy fat.

## ALMONDS

The fact is some items in my pantry are quite expensive, whereas almonds are probably the most bang for the buck. Every one-ounce serving (about 23 almonds) provides 6g of protein and 4g of fibre, plus 35% of your daily vitamin E. They are very versatile and I actually keep three types of almonds in my pantry: sliced, slivered, and whole. It's also not a nut but a seed since it's harvested from a pod. I use it almost everything, on top of sautéed vegetables, in my granola, on top of salads, and on hot cereals. When ground it makes a fantastic gluten free flour.

## WALNUTS

I use walnuts in place of pine nuts (as they are 1/3 the cost) for making my famous pesto. They also are great in protein pancakes, on top of any hot cereal, and on a vegan cheese plate. Tons of good fat and a healthy dose of protein, walnuts are an essential vegan pantry item.

# Nuts and seeds

## PECANS

Delicious on top of oatmeal, in salads, in my homemade granola bars, toasted, and used in a pesto, so many options and I have not met a kid that doesn't love to snack on pecans. The pecan is a species of hickory native to Mexico and the southcentral and southeastern regions of the United States and contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals – including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, several B vitamins, and zinc.

## CHIA SEEDS

I use chia seeds almost every day. They top my non dairy yogurts for a boost of 4g of protein for every tablespoon and I use them in all my baking as an egg replacer. Take 1 tablespoon of chia and 3-4 tablespoons of water and in five minutes you have a thick pudding that replaces an egg in baking. I also make overnight oats and chia a few times a week. Interesting fact, chia is part of the mint family.

## SUNFLOWER SEEDS

I always buy all my nuts and seeds raw and unsalted. Sunflower seeds are very versatile. I use them to top hot oatmeal, in my homemade granola, in cheese sauces, and is a fantastic salad topper giving you a boost of protein and healthy fats. They have a 1:1 carb and protein value, which make them particularly easy to digest. Toast them to bring out even more flavour.

## PUMPKIN SEEDS

How come the pumpkin seeds we buy at the store don't look like the pumpkin seeds we pull out of the pumpkin every year on Halloween? A pumpkin seed, also known as a pepita, is the edible seed of a pumpkin or certain other cultivars of squash. The seeds are typically rather flat and asymmetrically oval, and light green in colour and may have been removed from the white outer skin. Wow, that's a lot of work, glad I don't have to do that. With a wide variety of nutrients ranging from magnesium and manganese to copper, along with protein and zinc, pumpkin seeds are a nutritional powerhouse wrapped up in a very small package. They also contain plant compounds known as phytosterols and free-radical scavenging antioxidants. Pumpkin seeds, are one of the best sources of plant-based omega-3s (alpha-linolenic acid or ALA). There are 13g of protein in every cup of pumpkin seeds, but about 3x more carbs and only 235 calories.

## FLAX SEEDS

Flax a fibre crop cultivated in cooler regions of the world and is an excellent source of omega-3 essential fatty acids. It's a very good source of dietary fibre, vitamin B1, and copper, and who doesn't love copper? Keep in mind flax seeds need to be ground in order to be nutritionally functional.

# Nuts and seeds

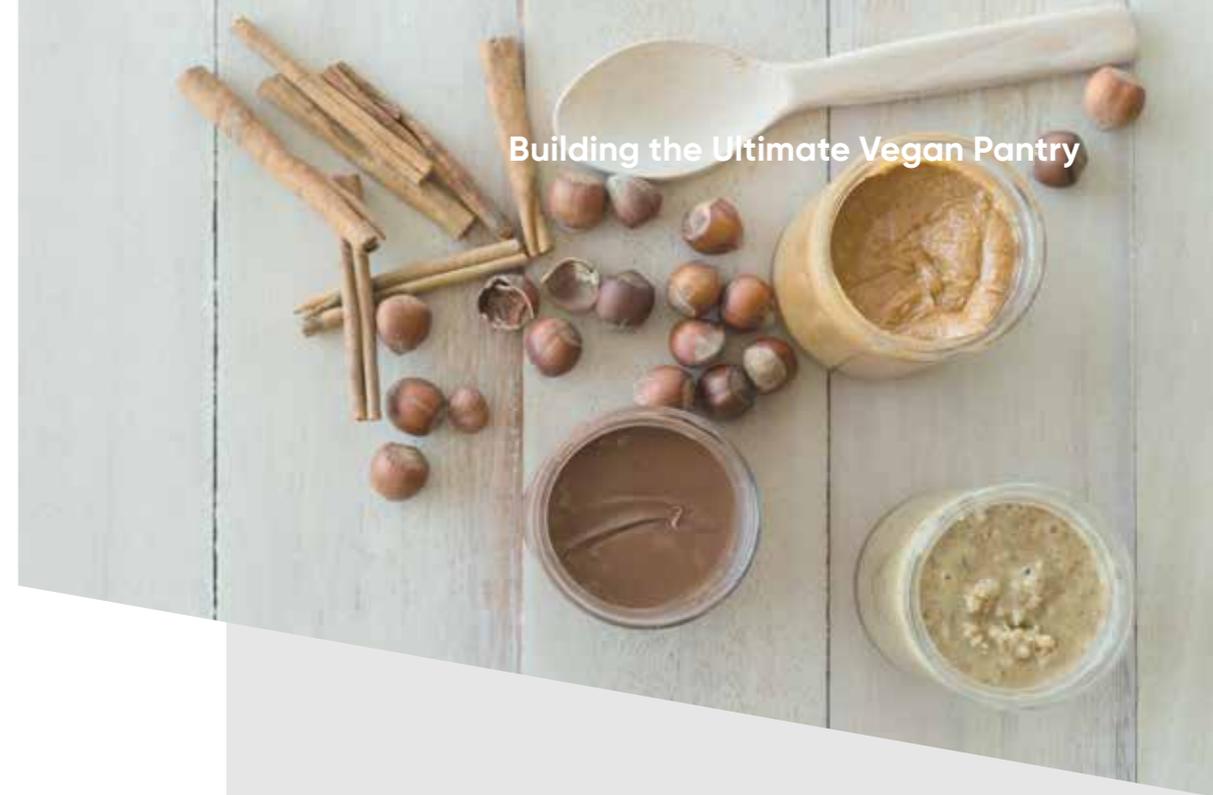
I put a few tablespoons of flax seeds into my oatmeal just a few minutes before it's finished cooking, allowing them to open up, this way I don't need to grind them. It also can be used as an egg replacement using the same technique as I reviewed under chia. And like many of the other items I have in my pantry high in protein, 31g per cup.

## SESAME SEEDS

One cup has 58g of good fats, both poly- and monounsaturated and monounsaturated, that's a huge dose of goodness that your body will love to burn. I love to roll my energy balls in sesame seeds to give them a bit of crunch. I sprinkle them on my tofu steaks and add them to salads. Lots of fibre and a greater protein to carbohydrate ratio when the fibre content is taken into consideration.

## HEMP HEARTS

If you only have one thing in your vegan pantry I would suggest you have hemp hearts. One tablespoon is about 4g of protein and is one of the only plant based proteins that is a complete protein. It's great on top of salads, coconut yogurt, stir frys, in your shakes, and in baking. It is very versatile. I also love to sprinkle it on top of hot noodles as it melts like cheese.



## NUT BUTTERS

At any given time I will have some combination of almond, peanut, cashew, pumpkin, and macadamia butters, but always almond and peanut butter. Almost every shake I make has a large tablespoon of peanut butter in it. I use almond butter as a base in my chia pudding and I love to spread any of these on sourdough or really any great bread.

**I Love Bread.**

# Grains & Flour



# Grains & Flour

## QUINOA

Every week I make a few cups of quinoa and use it as a base for things like tofu scramble or a topper on things like protein salads. It keeps in the fridge for over a week and like hemp hearts, it's a complete protein.

## RICE

I keep three to four types of rice in my pantry. Always a brown long grain, usually some type of basic white rice, or jasmine. Rice keeps for a very long time and the brown and darker types are full of protein.

## FLOUR

I have chickpea, spelt, whole wheat, and coconut flour in my pantry. I use chickpea to make everything from chickpea scramble to savoury chickpea protein pancakes. I use a combination of whole wheat and coconut flour to bake with. You need flour in your pantry.

## NUT AND SEED MEAL

Basically these are flours, but I use them differently. The two I always have are almond and flax. When you go to purchase these two items the almond is referred to as flour and the flax as either ground or meal. I use the almond in baking and to make protein balls and I use the flax in shakes, pasta, and to roll my protein balls in.

## WHEAT BERRY

Wheat berries are whole, unprocessed wheat kernels that contain all three parts of the grain, including the germ, bran, and starchy endosperm. Only the hull, the inedible outer layer of the grain, has been removed. As a result, wheat berries retain all of the grain's vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. They take much longer to cook than rice or quinoa, but it's delicious, keeps well in the fridge for a week and like quinoa, makes a great salad topper or base for things like stir fry.

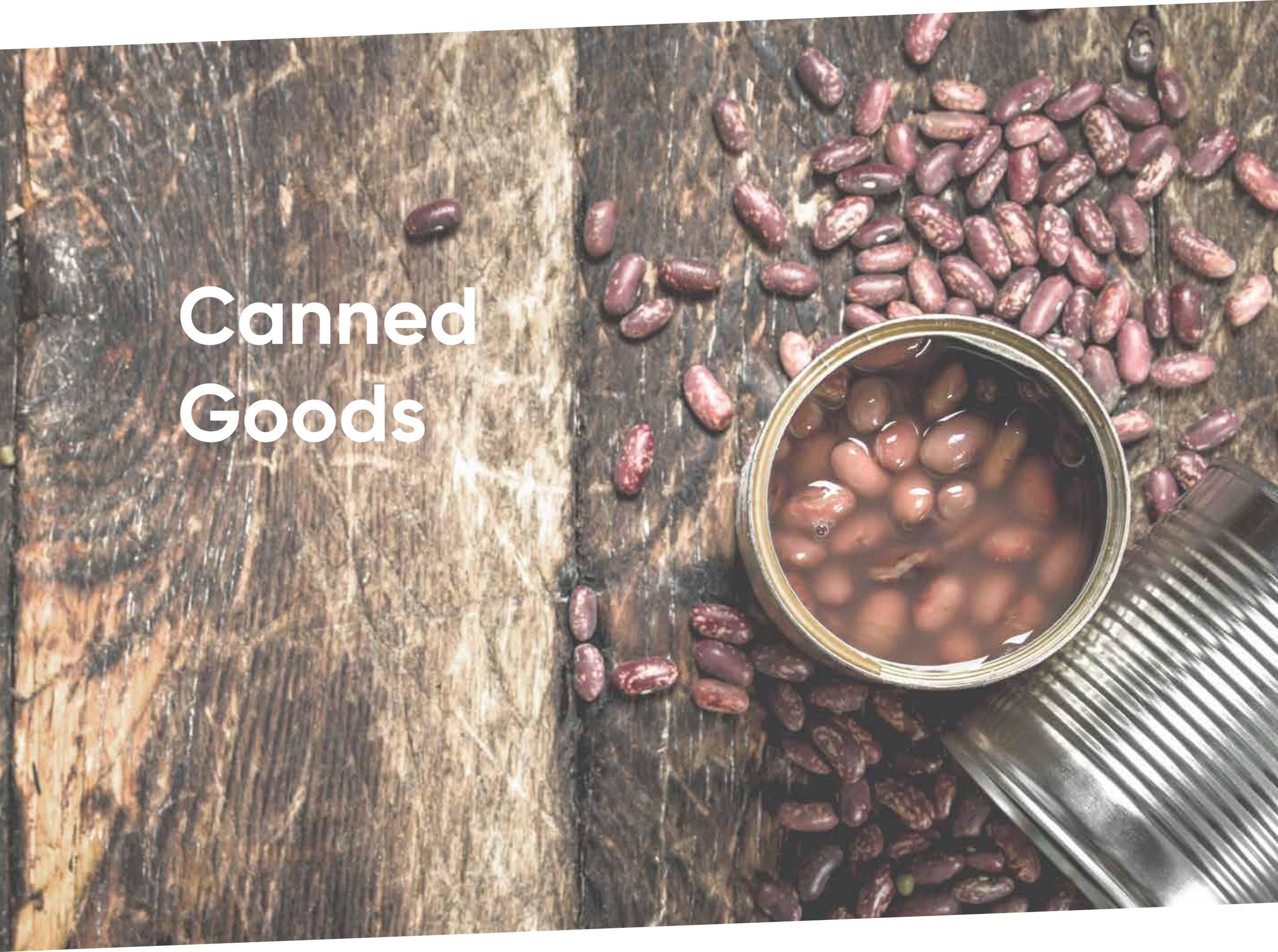
## CORNMEAL

There's a lot you can do with cornmeal and it's a staple in my pantry. It's one of my go-to ingredients for breading things I want to fry since it gets nice and crispy. I'm a big fan of polenta, so I use it to make both creamy polenta as a side dish or pour it into a pan after cooking so it forms into a cake, that can be cut up and eaten as cornbread.

## ROLLED OATS

Poor oats get flack as being too high in carbs and too high in sugar COME ON!!! Let's take it easy and focus on getting people off pop and deli meats shall we? I use oats in so many things, the obvious is oatmeal, which I love to top with 6+ nuts, seeds, and maple syrup. I use oats in baking my protein muffins and many of my energy balls have some oats in them. Oatmeal fills me up and keeps me full for a few hours at least. It is a lot of carbs, 66g per serving, so you want to be mindful of that as you plan what else you will eat that day.

# Canned Goods



## Canned Goods

MY PANTRY CONTAINS A FEW OTHER THINGS THAT I REACH FOR ALMOST EVERY WEEK.

### COCONUT/ALMOND MILK

It's my base for shakes and I use it in baking. I only buy unsweetened as it's completely unnecessary to buy sweetened nut milks. Every month there is a new entrant in the space. There's now chickpea and pea protein 'milks'.

### CANNED TOMATOES

I use these in all kinds of sauces. Enough said.

### SEAWEED

I usually have a few types of dried seaweed in my pantry to add to soups, to snack on, or use as a topping on Asian rice dishes.

### BEANS

I have both canned and dry beans. I almost always have canned chickpeas and navy beans and use them in salads, stews, chilis, and to make dips. The dry ones I like to sprout, along with lentils. Mung beans and adzuki beans are small and sprout within 2 days. Lentils and beans contain phytic acid, which can be difficult to digest. Sprouting neutralizes the phytic acid, which means more vitamins and minerals can be absorbed by your body as they're digested. I highly recommend sprouting beans and lentils every week. They keep in the fridge for at least a week and are very versatile.



# Oils & Spices



# Oils & Spices

## NUTRITIONAL YEAST

This is neither an oil or a spice, but I place it here because I use it like a spice, and one that I use everyday. It's a deactivated yeast, usually a strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. It has a strong flavour that is best described as cheesy or creamy. I use it in soups, stir fries, and as a cheese substitute - it perfectly replaces parmesan in pesto. Best of all, only two table spoon provides 9g of complete protein, providing all nine amino acids the human body cannot produce. Nutritional yeasts do not contain B12 unless they are fortified with it, so I always ensure I'm buying one that is.

## THE POWER 10 SPICES

Having these on hand will help when you start using chef Google to make tastier recipes. Basil, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, ginger, oregano, red pepper flakes, thyme, turmeric, and of course pepper and salt (I recommend kosher salt for cooking and a nice sea salt for finishing).

## OLIVE, AVOCADO, MCT, AND SESAME OILS

One important point here, don't cheap out on olive oil, there's a lot of crap out there and there's been a lot of reports that some oils labeled as olive are in fact sunflower oil. I love sesame oil for the distinct nutty flavour and I use MCT oil in my morning coffee. MCT oil is not only great for brain health, it also naturally suppresses appetite, and I find that it helps me crave carbs less often in the morning.

## RAW APPLE CIDER, RED WINE, SHERRY, AND BALSAMIC VINEGARS

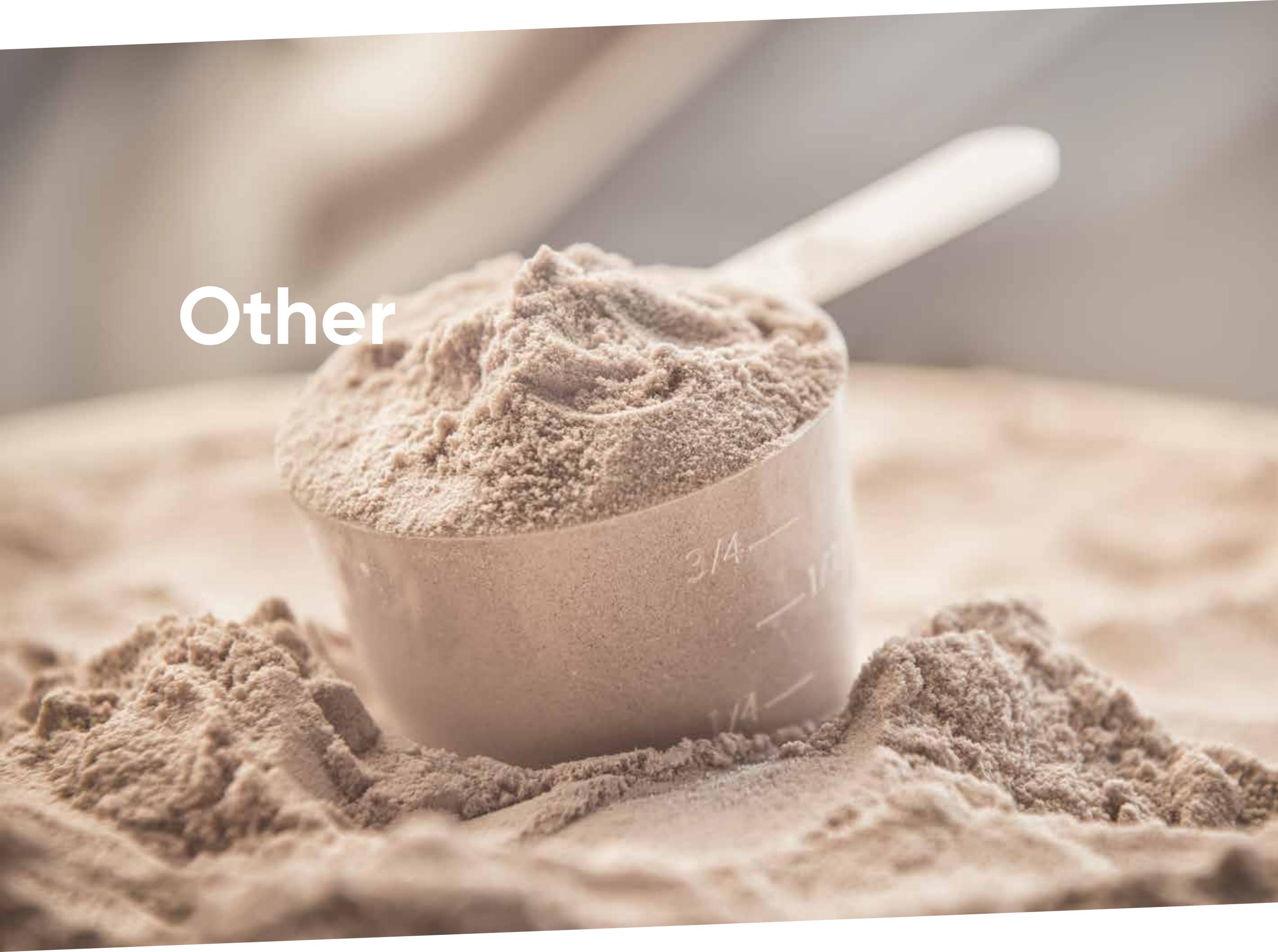
Mostly for salad dressings, but I use a tablespoon of raw apple cider vinegar every morning in a warm glass of lemon water. Not only does it have an alkaline pH, it also supports intestinal health by controlling candida populations. Just keep in mind balsamic vinegar is high on the glycemic index.

## COCONUT OIL

It's in all my baking, I fry in it, I add it to coffee with MCT oil when I want to make vegan Bulletproof Coffee®, and sometimes I just eat a tablespoon. No sugar, no cholesterol, and lots of good fat - 12g of saturated fat per tablespoon! These fats are necessary and keep your immune system healthy, your bone density normal, and your testosterone levels in check. The saturated fats in coconut oil have also been found to have no association with risk of heart disease and improves HDL/LDL cholesterol levels.



Other



# Other

## PROTEIN POWDER

Everyday I rely on getting 1/3 of my daily protein from a shake using my Blend-tec blender. From my pantry I rely on good, clean protein powder and I always have a few. I'm not here to recommend or endorse any brand, but I will tell you the ones I have bought and have enjoyed consuming. The main point is that you need vegan protein powder in your vegan pantry. Sun Warrior, True Nutrition, Garden Of Life, and Canadian Protein.

## DATES

Dates are amazing and there are many different types with varying flavours. They do contain natural sugar, so you need to be mindful if you are trying to maintain a moderate glycemic index profile. Basically, don't eat 20 of them for snack.

They are best combined with nuts and seeds because when you mix them with other things high in protein and fats, your body is able to evaluate the collection of things as a whole, spreading out the sugar content. This means, that your body will actually digest everything slower - making you feel full longer.

I love to use dates in homemade granolas and in baking to sweeten my muffins, cookies, and protein balls. They are also great in sauces - think date and red wine reduction over eggplant. Yum!

## RAISINS

I don't personally use raisins a lot because they are high in sugar. I'm not the raisins in baking kind of guy, but I do like making raisin sauces when I'm doing middle eastern dishes, like a Moroccan stew with cous-cous. They are also a good addition to trail mix and granolas. They are high in sugar (albeit natural sugar) and high in carbs, so you need to use raisins in moderation if you are trying to stay in shape and not a fan of spike your glycemic index.

## SHREDDED COCONUT

I always have a large container of unsweetened shredded coconut. Coconut has a wide variety of uses. It can be used for baking, topping, and fillers. I use it in my granola, I toast it with sesame seeds to top my pancakes or waffles, and I use it as a topping on my curries. There's a ton of great fat and fibre in coconut and surprisingly an equal amount of protein to sugar.

**Building and maintaining a diverse pantry is easier than you think. Yes, there is some effort up front, but the investment pays off in a big way. You'll cook at home more, you'll be healthier, and it's fun! Enjoy the ride and let me know how it goes or if I can help you.**