

# Holiday FEASTING

## TIPS FOR GRAIN-FREE BAKING

How can you cut out grains without losing all your favorite foods? It's easier than you think, even on a vegan diet.

Here are some tips I've found over the years:

### 1. GO NUTS.

They've been doing it in Europe for years: using ground nuts instead of flour. If you're able to eat nuts, grinding them to the texture of breadcrumbs or powder is one of the easiest and best ways to simulate traditional flour in baking (and seeds work, too!). I love [ground almonds](#) most, but almost any nut or seed will do. Use raw nuts (keep the skins on for more fiber) and grind in a coffee grinder, spice grinder, or food processor (be sure you don't overdo it, or you'll end up with nut butter, though!). Or you can opt for any of the various [prepared nut flours](#) or [seed flours](#) that you can find these days. And don't forget about [coconut flour](#), too.

### 2. USE YOUR BEAN.

Beans and legumes make additional fantastic grain-free flours. [Chickpea flour](#), [garfava](#) (a mix of chickpea and fava bean), [lentil](#), [pea](#), and many other varieties are now available; all add substance and binding power (as well as some extra protein) to your baking.

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### 3. GET TO THE ROOT OF IT ALL.

Many roots and other vegetables provide starches or flours, too. For instance, arrowroot, tapioca starch and potato starch can all help baked goods achieve a more tender crumb (texture). More recently, you'll find [tiger nut flour](#) (tigernuts are technically tubers), [plantain](#) or [green banana flour](#), or [cassava flour](#). For the anti-candida or low-carb diets, be sure to monitor the sugar and carb content of the flours you use. Green banana and plantain flours are a great ingredient, since they contain resistant starch, helpful for gut health.

### 4. INCLUDE A PROTEIN PUNCH.

Many protein powders on the market today are entirely grain-free, and work well when added to the batter for baked goods. I use [SunWarrior](#), [Growing Naturals](#), and [Nutiva Hemp](#) the most. A good rule of thumb is to replace no more than 1/4 of the total flour with protein powder, to ensure a pleasant texture in your final product. Generally, protein powder makes the best replacement for bean flours.

### 5. MIX IT UP.

The best way to ensure grain-free success is to combine at least two categories of grain-free flours when baking (but three is best). A combination will result in optimum texture to best recreate the baked goods you're used to. I often use a mix of half to 2/3 nut or seed flour with about 1/3 bean or legume flour, and the final 1/4 to 1/3 from starch.

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## 6. MAKE IT STICK.

Don't forget your binder! Grain-free is naturally also gluten-free, so you'll need to replace the gluten with another "glue." My favorite binder is [psyllium husks](#), but [ground flax](#) or [chia seeds](#) work nicely as well. And of course, you can always use [xanthan gum](#) (though technically it's not grain-free, since more xanthan is made from corn).

## 7. BE UPLIFTING.

Depending on the kind of baked good you're making, you'll want to add some leaveners to help the dough rise. Nuts, seeds, and legumes are denser than regular wheat flour, so they need a little extra "lift" to produce a light and tender final product. A general rule of thumb is to increase your recipe's leavener by about 25%. So, if the original recipe calls for 1 tsp (5 ml) [baking powder](#), increase it to 1-1/4 tsp or 6 ml for a grain-free version.