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Diana Keuilian

# THE RECIPE

# Hacker

Comfort foods without  
gluten, dairy, soy,  
grain, or cane sugar



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THE RECIPE  
*Hacker*

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# WELCOME TO THE RECIPE HACKER

My name is Diana Keulian and I'm a recipe hacker.

One day, while putting the finishing touches on dinner, I was trying to explain to my husband, B, how much I enjoy taking an existing, traditional recipe and turning it into something healthier. I rambled on about the challenge of taking out the gluten, sugar, dairy, soy, and grains without sacrificing flavor or consistency, and what a thrill I get when my healthier version of a classic turns out to be tastier than the original.

B looked up and said, "You know what you are? You're a recipe hacker."

I wasn't sure how to take that. It sounded rather outlawish.

Then again, in a sense, I broke the recipe code when I discovered how to use wholesome ingredient substitutions to transform traditional dishes into real food masterpieces.

I love food, to a fault. Sometimes I've looked at this as a curse, like when trying to lose the baby weight, but most of the time I see it for what it is: a blessing.

Food is a blessing, and really good, flavorful food is one of the highest pleasures of this life. Going to a gourmet restaurant and having the chef's tasting menu, or taking a warm cookie out of the oven and wiping melted chocolate off your face—does it get better than this?

Food is exciting and food is fun.

But eating lots of rich foods filled with grains, gluten, dairy, cane sugar, and soy left me overly full, bloated, and prone to weight gain.

So I started hacking recipes by swapping out the heavy stuff for lighter, real food ingredients. The resulting recipe has the taste, look, and feel of the original—without the ensuing food coma!

I love food *way* too much to give up flavorful and delicious dinners, snacks, and desserts. In this cookbook I'll share with you 100 of my favorite comfort food recipes, all made without grains, gluten, dairy, cane sugar, or soy. Some of these recipes are fan favorites from my blog, [RealHealthyRecipes.com](http://RealHealthyRecipes.com), while many more are brand new creations.

I hope that you enjoy these hacked recipes as much as I enjoyed making them!

## WHY HEALTHY?

You may wonder if it's worth the trouble to make healthy food, especially when fast food is so quick and convenient.

The fact is that our kids are becoming obese at a much younger age than any generation before them. Childhood obesity opens the door for a life riddled with health complications that can ultimately end in heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, amputations, blindness, or death at an early age.

My son, Andrew, was born in 2005, the same year that it was announced that our kids now have a shorter life expectancy than we do. What a wake-up call that was for me as a young new mother.

I couldn't allow my son to become a statistic.

This is where I find my motivation to take the extra time and effort to create and serve healthy food for my family.

You may feel the same way, or perhaps you've been pushed into the world of gluten-free due to allergies.

Whatever brought you to this place of wanting to cook healthy dishes, I'm so glad that you've arrived! The health and well-being of your family will be elevated and your taste buds will be rewarded.

And I'm pretty sure we will have some fun along the way too!

## REAL HEALTHY INGREDIENTS

Eliminating grains, gluten, dairy, cane sugar, and soy from your kitchen certainly opens up a few gaps. Here's how I fill them with healthier ingredients.

**Organic Ingredients: Whenever possible, I purchase organic ingredients. This goes for produce, meat, eggs, and pantry items. While I don't specify organic in each recipe, know that organic is preferred and will taste better and offer more nutrients.**

**Flax Meal:** This nutritional ground seed is used to replace flour in baking.

**Coconut Flour:** Ground from coconut meal, this is another wonderful flour substitute.

**Blanched Almond Flour:** Made from ground, blanched almonds. It's one of my favorite flour substitutes.

**Almond Meal:** Made from ground almonds with the skins still on, almond meal is a bit heartier than blanched almond flour.

**Almond Substitutes: For those of you who are unable to use almonds due to allergies, I have 2 substitutes for your baking. Grind raw**

**sunflower seeds or gluten-free oats into a flour, and use these in a 1:1 ratio for both blanched almond flour and almond meal.**

Coconut Palm Sugar: Made from dried coconut sap, this wholesome sweetener is a healthier alternative to cane sugar.

Pure Maple Syrup: Believe it or not, pure maple syrup works very well in baking.

Raw Honey: This is another one of my go-to wholesome sweeteners. It contains loads of vitamins and minerals. I always measure raw honey melted.

Coconut Milk: Thank goodness for the versatile coconut! Coconut milk is all that I use to replace dairy milk in my cooking.

Coconut Oil: This wholesome oil is my go-to in baking. It is also measured melted.

Kitchen tools that I could NOT live without (in no particular order): food processor, skillet, high-speed blender, measuring cups, measuring spoons, good mixing bowls, spiral slicer, 4-cup measuring cup with spout, griddle, spatula, whisk, thick wood cutting board, baking sheet, mini muffin pan, muffin pan, brownie pan, donut pan, and good knives.

## ~~A DISCLAIMER WARNING MESSAGE~~ BEFORE WE BEGIN

Let me introduce you to the Lazy Chef. <-- That's me.

I'm not a painstakingly precise person. If I could throw away my measuring cups, I would. I like to cook off instincts rather than instruction. But I can't exactly write a recipe without some precision.

In the photos you may see me using a partially filled tablespoon when the recipe calls for 2 teaspoons. You can bet that I measured 2 teaspoons into that tablespoon . . . but don't bet anything valuable because there's just as good a chance that I eyeballed it.

While in the kitchen, I have this need for speed and efficiency. And so I cut as many corners as I can, without sacrificing the end result. As much as I love to cook, there's a big world out there calling to me!

So you will notice that I don't have a lot of patience for things like sifting flour. A few strokes with a fork does the job, right? Come on, I need to post a recipe on Facebook.

I like to think of this as my being really efficient and not lazy, but the jury is still out on that. If you love to sift and do any other number of extra, fancy steps that you notice I leave out, please feel free to get as fancy as you'd like. I will applaud your efforts (while I post on Facebook . . . ).

All right, let's have some fun.





# BREAKFASTS

*... worth waking up for*

# BANANA PANCAKES

*Can't you see that it's just raining? Ain't no need to go outside . . .* My fellow Jack Johnson fans are grinning right now. More often than not I'm grooving to his mellow tunes while making messes in the RHR (Real Healthy Recipes) kitchen. If you aren't familiar with the catchy song "Banana Pancakes," then look it up or, better yet, put it on while you whip up a batch of these tender, delicious, grain-free pancakes. *Pretend like it's the weekend now . . .*

**Quick Tip:** To make your pancakes fluffier, place a glass lid over them as they cook. Don't ask me why! It's a combination of heat, baking soda, and magic. This trick takes a little more time, since you'll need to cook each pancake individually, but it really increases the fluffiness factor!

*Prep:* 15 minutes ❁ *Cook:* 8 minutes ❁ *Makes:* 4 servings

---

1 ripe banana, mashed  
2 eggs  
¼ cup coconut palm sugar  
1 Tbsp. vanilla extract  
¼ tsp. almond extract  
1½ cups blanched almond flour  
½ tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. sea salt  
coconut oil for greasing the griddle

- 
- 1) Preheat your pancake griddle or large skillet over medium-high heat.
  - 2) Combine the banana, eggs, coconut palm sugar, vanilla extract, and almond extract in a food processor. Blend until smooth.
  - 3) In a medium bowl, combine the almond flour, baking soda, and sea salt. (Or don't. If you need pancakes lickety-split, then skip this step and settle for a few possible lumps. I won't judge.) Add the dry ingredients to the food processor and pulse until smooth. Let the batter sit for 10–15 minutes, if you can muster the patience. This will help your pancakes bind together.
  - 4) Use a paper towel to carefully rub coconut oil on your preheated griddle or skillet. Reduce the heat to medium. Use a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup to scoop the batter onto the griddle in nice big circles. When bubbles form, flip the pancakes to cook on the other side. Serve with fresh fruit, pure maple syrup, and your favorite tunes. Enjoy!



# SWEDISH PANCAKES

Swedish pancakes were my favorite breakfast while growing up. I'd enjoy a big stack of these thinly rolled cakes on my birthday every year. The best part was a big pat of fruit-spiked butter melting on top. Mmmmmm, pass the syrup. Naturally, I hacked this favorite recipe, leaving out the grains, gluten, dairy, and cane sugar.

*Quick Tip:* To make your own dairy-free, fruit-spiked butter, soften some coconut butter and use an electric mixer to whip it. Add a few spoonfuls of fruit-only jam or blended fresh berries. Scoop the mixture into a small bowl, and chill in the fridge until pancake time.

*Prep:* 10 minutes 🌀 *Cook:* 20 minutes 🌀 *Makes:* 4 servings

---

4 eggs

2 cups coconut milk, full fat

½ cup blanched almond flour

¼ cup arrowroot starch

1 Tbsp. coconut palm sugar

¼ tsp. sea salt

½ tsp. vanilla extract

---

1) Preheat a pancake griddle or large skillet. Lightly grease with coconut oil.

2) Combine all of the ingredients in a food processor. Blend until smooth. The batter will be thin.



3) Pour the batter into a large measuring cup with a spout. This will help you easily pour the batter. Pour a ring of batter onto the preheated griddle and allow it to set for about 10 seconds. Slowly pour more batter into the center of the ring until filled. Cook until the bottom is lightly browned. Flip over and cook briefly until that side is browned. Serve with syrup and fresh fruit. Enjoy!



# WAFFLES

Who doesn't love a lazy weekend breakfast of waffles and fresh fruit? Too bad most waffle recipes are filled with gluten and refined sugar. These grain-free waffles are the perfect weekend indulgence that won't leave you bloated and lethargic. Instead, this breakfast of champions will fill you with real food energy to power you through your active weekend. Go get 'em, Tiger!

*Quick Tip:* Try this simple, tropical fruit topping on your waffles. Slice a mango and banana into a bowl. Add halved segments from a tangerine. Mix in a sprinkle of ground cinnamon. Yum, an instant Hawaiian vacation! Or not. But it does taste good.

*Prep:* 25 minutes  *Cook:* 4 minutes  *Makes:* 4 servings

---

4 eggs

½ cup canned coconut milk, full fat

2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 cup blanched almond flour

1 Tbsp. coconut flour

1 tsp. baking soda

¼ tsp. sea salt

¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

---

1) Preheat a waffle iron and lightly grease with coconut oil. Combine the eggs, coconut milk, syrup, and vanilla extract in a bowl. Mix well.

2) Combine the almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, sea salt, and cinnamon in another bowl. Add to the wet ingredients and mix well.

3) Pour the batter onto the preheated waffle iron and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions. Serve with fresh fruit and pure maple syrup. Enjoy!



# CINNAMON ROLLS

When I was growing up, back when hanging out at the mall and eating gluten were both in vogue, I made many stops at the Cinnabon counter. All of those after-school cinnamon rolls probably explain how I landed the childhood nickname of Baby Fat. Kids can be cruel and brutally honest. By the time I was entering 9th grade, I had packed nearly 150 pounds into my 5-foot frame. There was no denying the fact that I was chubby.

At the time, I had no concept of nutrition. No one pointed out that the majority of my diet was sugar and grains, which were causing me to gain weight. It took years of struggling with my weight and reading about nutrition to discover that once I cut out the sugar and the grains, my body would drop the excess fat.

Now it's been years since I've tasted a traditional cinnamon roll. When a craving hits, I make this grain- and refined sugar-free recipe for cinnamon rolls. To recreate the buttery, cinnamon goo, I used coconut oil, coconut crystals, golden raisins, chopped pecans, and ground cinnamon. (Lots of ground cinnamon!) You'll never need a traditional cinnamon roll after trying this recipe.

*Quick Tip:* These 3 steps are important for successfully rolling and slicing the dough:

- 1) Chill the dough for at least 15 minutes before rolling.
- 2) Use the parchment paper to assist you in rolling, don't attempt to roll just with your hands.
- 3) Use a string to cut the rolls, rather than a knife. This helps make a clean cut that doesn't squish the rest of the roll.

*Prep.*: 30 minutes ❁ *Bake.*: 20 minutes ❁ *Oven.*: 350° F ❁ *Makes.*: 15 rolls

---

2½ cups blanched almond flour  
¼ cup coconut flour  
¼ tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. sea salt  
½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. coconut oil, divided  
¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. raw honey, divided  
2 eggs  
1 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. vanilla extract, divided  
¾ cup coconut palm sugar, divided  
2 Tbsp. ground cinnamon  
¼ cup golden raisins  
¼ cup pecans  
¼ tsp. almond extract

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- 1) Preheat the oven to 350° F. Lightly grease a pan with coconut oil.
- 2) Combine the almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, and sea salt in a medium bowl and mix to remove any lumps. Combine ¼ cup coconut oil, 2 tablespoons raw honey, eggs, 1 tablespoon vanilla extract, and ¼ cup coconut palm sugar in another medium bowl and mix well. Combine the wet and dry ingredients and mix well. Chill the dough for 15 minutes.

3) Cut two rectangular pieces of parchment paper and place the dough in between them. Use a rolling pin to flatten the dough evenly into a large rectangle. Remove the top piece of parchment paper.

4) In a small bowl, combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut palm sugar, ground cinnamon, 2 tablespoons coconut oil, and the golden raisins and chopped pecans. Sprinkle this filling mixture over the flattened dough, and then carefully roll it up. Use the bottom parchment paper to assist in rolling the dough—this works better than using your hands. Use a serrated knife to carefully slice the dough into 15 rolls. Or use a string to wrap around the roll and pull tight, cutting the dough. Carefully place the pieces on your prepared pan.

5) Bake for 20 minutes.

6) In a small bowl, combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup raw honey,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup coconut oil,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon almond extract, and 2 teaspoons vanilla extract. Drizzle over the cinnamon rolls. Sprinkle with chopped pecans. Enjoy!



# CINNAMON PUFFS

A big shout-out to Ree Drummond (from *The Pioneer Woman Cooks*) for this recipe. I got the idea from her French Breakfast Puffs recipe and did a little hacking. I finagled the ingredients to take out the refined sugar, butter, and white flour. Ree is shaking her head in disappointment right now. I'm sorry! It's just that those of us who don't eat refined sugar, butter, and white flour still really, really want to eat cinnamon puffy things for breakfast. She will forgive me. I hope. One day.

*Quick Tip:* If you're allergic to almonds, there are two wonderful substitutions you can use in a 1:1 ratio instead of almond flour: 1) Grind sunflower seeds into flour in your food processor. 2) Grind gluten-free oats into flour in your food processor. Use these substitutions in any recipe that calls for almond meal or blanched almond flour.

*Prep:* 20 minutes 🌸 *Bake:* 25 minutes 🌸 *Oven:* 350° F 🌸 *Makes:* 12  
muffins

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2 cups blanched almond flour  
1/3 cup coconut flour  
1 Tbsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. sea salt  
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg  
1 1/2 cups coconut palm sugar, divided  
2/3 cup palm shortening

2 eggs  
1 cup canned coconut milk, full fat  
1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

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- 1) Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a 12-cup muffin tin with coconut oil.
- 2) Combine the blanched almond flour, coconut flour, baking powder, sea salt, and nutmeg in a medium bowl.
- 3) Combine 1 cup coconut palm sugar and palm shortening in a bowl and cream using an electric mixer. Add the eggs and mix well.
- 4) Alternately add spoonfuls of the dry ingredients and splashes of the coconut milk, beating well after each addition. The batter will be very creamy.
- 5) Fill the greased muffin cups with batter. Smooth the tops of each muffin. Bake for 20–25 minutes, until golden and baked through.
- 6) Combine the remaining ½ cup coconut palm sugar and ground cinnamon in a shallow bowl. Allow the muffins to cool, and then roll in the cinnamon sugar mixture. Serve with tea or some other hot beverage in fancy cups with delicate handles. Enjoy!



# BRAN MUFFINS

My real healthy recipe-hacking philosophy on making improvements to our eating habits is simple: don't deprive. Instead simply replace unhealthy items for healthier ones. So I came up with this gluten- and refined sugar-free recipe for muffins that are just as moist and delicious as the store bought bran ones.

*Quick Tip:* If you don't already have a mini muffin pan, drop everything and go get one right now. It's okay, I'll wait. Seriously, mini muffin pans are a godsend when it comes to portion control. One mini muffin is all it takes to satisfy that sweet tooth.

*Prep:* 20 minutes ❁ *Bake:* 20 minutes ❁ *Oven:* 350° F ❁ *Makes:* 24  
mini muffins

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½ cup blanched almond flour  
½ cup flax meal  
1 Tbsp. coconut flour  
1 tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. sea salt  
½ tsp. ground cinnamon  
3 eggs  
half a banana  
⅓ cup coconut palm sugar  
2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup

¼ cup canned coconut milk, full fat  
2 Tbsp. almond butter  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
½ cup golden raisins  
½ cup raw pecans  
1 Tbsp. coconut oil

---

- 1) Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line a 24-cup mini muffin tin with paper liners.
- 2) Combine the almond flour, flax meal, coconut flour, baking soda, sea salt, and ground cinnamon in a medium bowl. Mix well.
- 3) Combine the eggs, banana, coconut palm sugar, maple syrup, coconut milk, almond butter, and vanilla extract in a food processor. Blend until smooth.
- 4) Add the dry ingredients to the food processor. Pulse until smooth. Add the raisins and pecans to the food processor. Pulse for 15 seconds. Add the melted coconut oil and pulse again until just combined.
- 5) Fill the mini muffin tins with batter. Bake for 15–20 minutes until golden and baked through. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Enjoy!



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