

Healthy Condiments that Actually Taste Great

Move over, mayo, make room, mustard, and take a hike, ketchup! There are so many ways to add flavor to food, and they don't require a lot of sugar, salt, or added fat to make your meals incredible.

Think about using predominantly whole foods to add some zing and nutrition to your cooking and even takeout. Rather than highly processed spreads and sauces, which of course can fit into your plan in small amounts, turn first to more healthful (and tastier) alternatives based on vegetables, fruits, herbs, seeds, nuts, and beans. The sauces here (and others like them) fit into most goal diet plans. Here are a few ideas. For recipes, search online for each sauce using "traditional recipe" following the sauce name.



Pico de Gallo (recipe below)

Use on burgers and loaves, with crackers and toasts, and of course as a salsa. Great with all things Mexican (tacos, burritos, tostadas, etc.) as well as tofu or egg dishes, toast or crackers, vegetables, chili, and beans.

Hummus

Spread on sandwiches and burgers, use as a base on a flatbread or tostada, swap out the mayo in traditional mayo-containing recipes, dip sweet potato fries, crisps, and raw veggies. Whisk with water to a pourable consistency to use as a salad dressing or sauce for vegetables, baked or roasted potatoes, noodles, or grains. You can buy it at most grocery stores, or make it yourself. Prefer black beans? White beans? Any bean dip will do!



Tahini Sauce

Tahini is simply ground up sesame seeds. Think of this as hummus without the chickpeas. It is a wonderful flavor that goes with so many different foods. A batch will last covered in the fridge for about 5 days; use it on just about everything: salads, breads, crackers, veggie burgers (both inside the mix and on top), raw and cooked veggies, beans, grains, and tofu. Four tablespoons is about equivalent to a serving of nuts.



Mint Chutney

This is so fresh, flavorful, and easy to make! It's simply herbs, garlic, onion, hot pepper, lemon, and salt, but it's magical. You can't overdo this one, as it's all veggies and a little goes a long way. You can use this in the traditional manner, with Indian appetizers, or get creative! Try it on a baked sweet potato, stirred into steamed lentils, as a topping for grilled tofu or eggs, in a burger or loaf, and with bean dishes, rice and other grains, and a bread spread.



Pico de Gallo



This is a perfect recipe for late summer, when tomatoes and peppers are still plentiful and flavorful. The recipe calls for large tomatoes, but it works with any type of tomato you'd like – budget seekers can use the lowest per-pound price variety at the store.

You will need:

- 2 large, ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 large jalapeno pepper, diced (use a ½ green bell pepper if you prefer less heat)
- 1 small red onion, diced
- ⅓ to ½ cup fresh cilantro (measured packed), chopped
- Juice of ½ lime
- Salt to taste (optional -- this recipe truly does not need it!)

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss well.

Make this a main dish by adding a 15-oz can each of rinsed and drained black beans and corn, and tossing with hot brown rice.

Variations:

- Substitute some or all of the tomato with fresh mango or papaya
- Omit the jalapeno and use bell peppers (you can use crushed red pepper if you still want the spice)
- Add other raw veggies like cucumber
- Change up the flavor profile by swapping out the cilantro for fresh parsley, dill, or basil