

story Laurie Wallace-Lynch

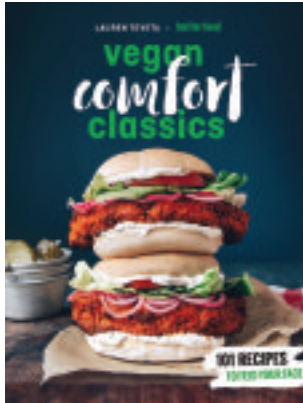
**T**he second annual *Mississauga Vegan Fest* was a huge success and proof that interest in vegan food and vegan products are on the rise. We are seeing more and more vegan options on grocery shelves and on restaurant menus, such as the new *Nourish Moi* vegan restaurant in Mississauga.

Alt-meat meals are going mainstream. Consider the new Beyond Meat burger at *A&W* and now, *Tim Hortons*. The patty is made from 100 percent plant-based pea-proteins. And just in time for burger season, you should see Beyond Meat burgers available at local grocery stores including *Planet Organic* and *FreshCo*.

In case you are wondering about the difference between a vegan and vegetarian diet; while neither vegans nor vegetarians eat meat, vegetarians may choose to consume dairy products and eggs, while vegans avoid all animal products including eggs and dairy, and avoid purchasing any products derived from animals, such as leather and wool.

If you are contemplating following a vegan lifestyle, have teens who are vegan, or have a guest coming for dinner who is vegan and are wondering what on earth to make, we have sourced three of the hottest vegan cookbooks on the market, including one by Mississauga's own Lauren Toyota!





## Vegan Comfort Classics: 101 Recipes to Feed Your Face

By Lauren Toyota

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Lauren Toyota is a vegan *YouTube* sensation who grew up in Mississauga. Her *YouTube* channel and blog *Hot for Food* has over 450,000 followers, while her debut cookbook *Vegan Comfort Classics* is taking the vegan world by storm. Lauren Toyota is a former MuchMusic VJ and MTV Canada host and *YouTube* sensation. In 2009 she started blogging about her transformation to a vegan lifestyle on [hotforfoodblog.com](http://hotforfoodblog.com). She calls her new book “a fun and flavourful take on vegan food, that’s saucy, sweet, sassy and definitely deep-fried!”

The book has zoomed to the #1 selling cookbook in America, according to Nielsen BookScan and was ranked in the Top 100 overall books on Amazon.com.

So to all the omnivores out there...anything you can eat, I can eat better AND vegan. I’m in the business of making food porn. Tasty, drool-worthy vegan creations that mimic the flavours, textures and feeling of dishes traditionally made with animal-based ingredients.”



## FAJITA FIESTA BOWLS

Makes 4 servings • Prep Time 35 minutes • Cook Time 25 minutes

### Ingredients:

#### prep ahead

The Sour Cream (page 210 in book)

#### salsa

1 cup finely diced tomato  
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro  
Juice of 1/2 lime  
Sea salt and ground pepper

#### lime rice

1-1/2 cups long-grain white rice  
2 cups water  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt  
Juice of 1/2 lime  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

#### fajita sauté

1 cup thinly sliced red bell pepper  
1 cup thinly sliced green bell pepper  
1 cup thinly sliced red onion  
4 large portobello mushrooms, sliced (about 3 cups)  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 teaspoon chipotle chile powder  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground pepper

#### guacamole

1 large or 2 small ripe avocados  
Juice of 1 lime  
Sea salt and ground pepper

#### serve with

2 cups frozen corn, thawed and drained  
The Sour Cream

To make the salsa, combine the tomato, onion, cilantro, and lime juice in a bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

To make the lime rice, combine the rice, water, garlic, and salt in a pot, cover, and bring to a boil. Stir, cover again, lower the heat to a simmer, and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. While the rice is still warm, stir in the lime juice and cilantro. Set aside and keep covered. Adjust the water and cooking time for your particular brand of rice!

To make the fajita sauté, in a skillet over medium-high heat, sauté the bell peppers, onion, and portobellos with the vegetable oil for 3 minutes until the peppers and onions are just softened and the mushrooms are releasing moisture. Add the chipotle chile powder, salt, and pepper and continue cooking for 3 to 4 minutes until most of the liquid has evaporated or until cooked to your liking.

Make the guacamole right before assembling bowls. Halve and pit the avocados. Scoop the avocado flesh into a bowl and mash with the lime juice, salt, and pepper to taste.

For each serving, place a bed of lime rice in a bowl. Top with the sautéed vegetables, corn, salsa, and guacamole. Garnish with the sour cream.

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## Vegan 100: Over 100 Incredible Recipes from Avant-Garde Vegan

By Gaz Oakley

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Gaz Oakley is a former professional chef from London, England who says he went vegan in 2015 for health benefits. Just a few months after going vegan, he started *Avant-Garde Vegan* on Instagram which rocketed the vegan chef to star status. This *YouTube* sensation has thousands of new subscribers each month and now has released his first cookbook called **Vegan 100; Over 100 Incredible Recipes from Avant-Garde Vegan.**

“I am hoping that this book will help lots of people—all new vegans, everyone who’s thinking of going vegan, and seasoned vegans who just want to get a little more adventurous in the kitchen,” says Gaz in the book’s Introduction.

He reassures readers that although some of the recipes may take long and have more than five ingredients, they are easy and simple to follow. Delightful recipes include *Smashed Avo, Potato & Leek Croquettes with Relish, Asparagus & Kale Caesar Salad, Summer Berry & White Chocolate Raw Mousse Cake* and even *Fancy Baked Doughnuts*.

## CHOCOLATE NOT-ELLA HAZELNUT SPREAD

Makes a 227-g (8-oz) jar

### Ingredients:

140g (1 cup) raw hazelnuts  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
25g (1/4 cup) organic cocoa powder  
4 tbsp agave nectar or maple syrup

pinch sea salt

2 tbsp melted coconut oil

240ml (1 cup) milk (I use hazelnut Milk; see page 12 in book and below)



Simply throw everything into a high-speed blender and blend for 20 seconds. Open it and check it as you may have to scrape the sides and give it a little mix, then blend for a further 20 seconds, or until it’s totally smooth.

Pop into a sterilized 227-g (8-oz) jar or container and into the fridge where it will keep for up to 4 days.

### Milk - Makes 1 litre (1 quart)

#### Ingredients:

125g (1 cup) blanched almonds or cashews OR  
100g (1 cup) rolled oats  
1 litre (4 cups) ice-cold filtered water

4 Medjool dates, pitted (an optional sweetener, or a little agave nectar or maple syrup to taste)

pinch sea salt

pinch ground cinnamon or grated nutmeg (optional)

Soak the nuts in cold water for at least 8 hours or overnight. I usually soak the nuts before going to bed ready to make the milk in the morning. If you are using oats you do not need to soak them – oat milk is ideal if you need milk quickly!

The next morning, drain away the soaking water, then tip the nuts into a high-speed blender with the cold filtered water and sweetener (if using). Make sure your water is super-cold as the blender will generate some heat which will spoil some of the nutrients if the milk mixture gets warm when blending. Blend until smooth.

Next grab a large jug or container and a milk bag or cheese cloth (or, if you don’t have either, a clean tea towel will work perfectly). Secure your cloth over the container and pour the milk mixture through.

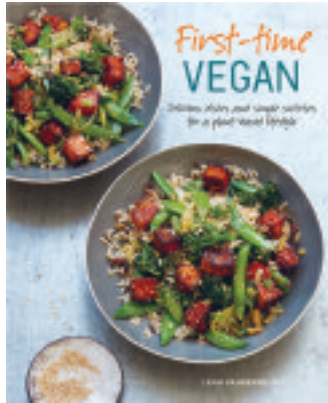
Squeeze all the excess liquid out of the mixture, until you have every last speck of liquid out. Then you’re done – you should be left with a beautiful fresh batch of the finest milk. Stir in the sea salt, and the cinnamon or nutmeg if using.

Keep the milk in the fridge in a clean covered container for up to 3 days.

Don’t just stop at nut and oats. I often make milk with shelled hemp seeds: use the same measurements, don’t soak the hemp seeds beforehand, and swap the filtered water for coconut water.

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## First-Time Vegan: Delicious Dishes and Simple Switches for a Plant-Based Lifestyle

By Leah Vanderveldt

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Author Leah Vanderveldt shows us how to begin our vegan journey with over 80 easy-to-follow, nourishing and delicious plant-based recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner and desserts. A good read is the chapter called *The Basics* where readers learn about getting enough protein and quickly whipping up a batch of *Lazy Almond Milk* or *Cashew Milk*, and make yummy dips like *Creamy Chipotle Dip* or *Basic Avocado Dip*.

*Chai & Turmeric Porridge* or the *Ultimate Breakfast Sandwich* will give you a good start to the day. *Ginger Coconut Broth* or *Butternut Squash & Black Bean Chili* are soul-satisfying dishes for lunch or dinner. *Vegetable Loaded Nachos* make a great treat for game day, while the *Chocolate Banana Bread* will be your new go-to snack.

For parents who are raising a vegan, this is a great guide to helping them on their journey as well as a blueprint for those of us who have friends who are vegan and have no idea what to serve,



Photo by Clare Winfield

## EVERYTHING AVOCADO TOAST

Everything bagels are famous in New York—they're covered in a flavourful combination of seeds and alliums and in my opinion, they're the best type of bagel. When I lived in Sydney, it was pretty much impossible to find anything comparable to a New York bagel, so my *Everything Bagel Spice Mix* became an easy way to get a little taste of home. Combined with avocado and spring onions/scallions, this is pretty much all of my favourite breakfasts rolled into one.

Serves 2

### Ingredients:

2 large (or 4 small) slices of sourdough, whole-grain or sprouted grain bread  
1 avocado, peeled, pitted and roughly chopped  
1 spring onion/scallion, finely sliced  
Everything Bagel Spice Mix (beside)

### Everything Bagel Mix

(makes about 4 tablespoons):

1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
1 tablespoon poppy seeds  
1 tablespoon dried garlic granules  
1 tablespoon onion powder or dried onion  
2 teaspoons sea salt

Toast the bread to your liking, then top with the avocado, dividing it evenly between each slice. Use a fork to mash the avocado, pressing it into the toast. Sprinkle with the sliced spring onion/scallion and finally with some of the Everything Bagel Spice Mix.

For the Everything Bagel Spice Mix: toast the sesame seeds in a dry frying pan/skillet over a medium-low heat for about 5 minutes until turning golden. Watch them carefully, as they can burn easily. Remove from heat and allow to cool for about 5 minutes.

Put all the seeds and flavourings together in a small jar and shake to combine. The spice mix will keep for up to 6 months in the jar with a lid. It's also a great flavour and texture boost on salads, quinoa/grains, hummus and baked into savoury bread or muffins.

\* Excerpted from *First-Time Vegan* by Leah Vanderveldt, published by Ryland Peters & Small (CAN \$19.95). Photographs © Ryland Peters & Small, 2019. Used with permission from the publisher.