

CLEAN PLATES



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RECIPES

12 More Awesome Uses For Almond Butter

By Sarah McColl

We think of it as peanut butter all grown up, so it's no surprise **almond butter's** fans are legion. And while we're not above dipping a spoon straight into the jar, sometimes we do aim higher.

"Who doesn't love the creamy feel and distinctive taste of almond butter?" asks Annie B. Kay, lead nutritionist at the **Kripalu Center** in Stockbridge, Mass. "It's a rich, delicious whole food and a nutritional plant-based powerhouse." For those moderating their animal protein intake, almond butter gives the same amount of protein gram for gram as meat, while also providing fiber, heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and an array of minerals for heart and bone health, Kay notes.

We turned to a roster of tastemakers for ideas that put the cupboard champion into easy, inventive new roles at breakfast, lunch, snack time, and dinner.

BLITZ INTO A SMOOTHIE

Kay likes to start the day with a smoothie loaded with fiber, monounsaturated fat and plant protein. For a super-thick A.M. shake (that would also double beautifully as the base of a **smoothie bowl**), blend apple, pear and frozen blueberries with hemp protein and raw almond butter. Want to thin it out a bit? Just add water.

FLIP FOR PANCAKES

You already spread almond butter on your gluten-free toaster waffle, but try upping your almond butter breakfast game with these protein-packed pancakes from New York City chef **Jenny Dorsey**. "It's super easy. Just mix 1/2 cup almond butter with 2 large eggs

and 2 to 3 ripe mashed bananas. Saute them in a non-stick pan with some butter or coconut oil. Super-Paleo, healthy, and delicious.”

ENJOY A SIMPLE SANDWICH

Consider it the grown-up version of PB&J. At **True Food Kitchen** in Chicago, chef Michael “Sully” Sullivan serves up a sweet-and-salty sandwich of almond butter, banana, and apple on seeded grain bread. Yeah, it’s on the kid’s menu, but we won’t judge if you want it and you’re over 12, or if you make one at home.

WHISK INTO A DRESSING

“Make a delicious dressing with a finely chopped chili, juice and zest of half a lime, a dash of soy sauce and sesame oil, and a heaped teaspoon of almond butter,” suggests **Anna Jones**, author of **A Modern Way to Cook**. Drizzle on steamed vegetables, massage into raw kale, or spoon on top of a bowl of noodles for a fast weeknight supper.

MAKE IT AN AFTERNOON PICK-ME-UP

Grab ingredients you already have in your pantry for an Insta-worthy snap. **Blissful Basil’s Ashley Melillo** relies on almond butter to power her favorite snack of all time, which also happens to be super-easy and quick: Slather it on brown rice cakes, top with fresh raspberries or berry chia jam, and drizzle on a touch of pure maple syrup.

TRY NO-BRAINER ENERGY BALLS

No food processor? No problem. Nealy Fischer of **The Flexible Chef** whips up a quick batch of energy balls by hand-mixing equal parts almond flour, oats, and almond butter. Toss in a few chocolate chips, roll into ping pong-sized balls, and away you go.

USE IT FOR AN APPETIZER—AND THEN FOR DESSERT

Sub in almond butter for tahini when you blitz a batch of hummus, suggests **Integrative Nutrition** health coach and natural foods chef **Kristen Link**. Or mix it with Greek yogurt and fresh herbs for a super-fast dip. For a sweet treat, melt almond butter with a quick zap in the microwave, drizzle over sliced pears and sprinkle with a mix of rolled oats and shredded coconut. Fruit crumble time, no oven required.

SPICE UP A STEW

Nut butters may not immediately make you think of soups, but that’s where cookbook author smarties like **Dina Cheney** come in. “I love to add 1 to 2 tablespoons of almond

butter to Indian stews,” says the author of *The New Milks*. “For instance, this week, I made a stew with cauliflower, potato, and chickpeas. I added almond butter for creaminess and to enhance the nutty flavor of the chickpeas.” We’ll have a bowl of that, please.

INDULGE IN A GOOD-FOR-YOU CANDY BAR...

We went nuts for this stone-cold simple sweet-tooth workaround from integrative health coach **Caryn O’Sullivan**. Spread almond butter on a fresh, pitted date and top with a dark chocolate chip. “It tastes like a candy bar and is completely satisfying,” O’Sullivan says. “The almond butter provides protein in a creamy, sweet texture, the dates are a good source of fiber and potassium, and the chocolate chip brings it all together in one sweet bite.”

...OR TAKE A DIFFERENT SPIN ON PB-CHOCOLATE CUPS

“Peanut butter cups are a fan favorite, but usually loaded with sugar and artificial ingredients,” says celebrated yoga instructor and holistic health coach **Kerri Axelrod**. “These almond butter cups are the perfect substitute so you don’t have to miss out on your favorite peanut butter treats.” In the bowl of a food processor, blitz 2 tablespoons melted coconut oil, 1 cup almond butter, and 1-2 tablespoons of **monk fruit**. Pour mixture into a mini muffin tin and top with two melted 2-ounce bars of Stevia-sweetened dark chocolate. (Kerri likes the brand **Pure7**, which is sweetened with honey). Chill in the freezer for about 30 minutes to set.

USE UP EVERY LAST SPOONFUL

We hate to see good food go to waste, so we love this use-it-up idea from Ashley Pitt of **A Lady Goes West**. “When the almond butter jar is getting close to empty, and there are remnants all around the inside, I like to fill the jar with oats, Greek yogurt and chia seeds to make overnight oats. I let it sit in the fridge overnight, and in the morning take it out and eat it. It’s so good with that extra almond butter soaking into the oats for added flavor and fat.” Now, that’s an idea worth waking up for.