

quick & healthy

# almond flour the new superfood?

Try a healthier twist on baking by swapping out wheat flour for this protein-packed alternative.

BY ELANA AMSTERDAM

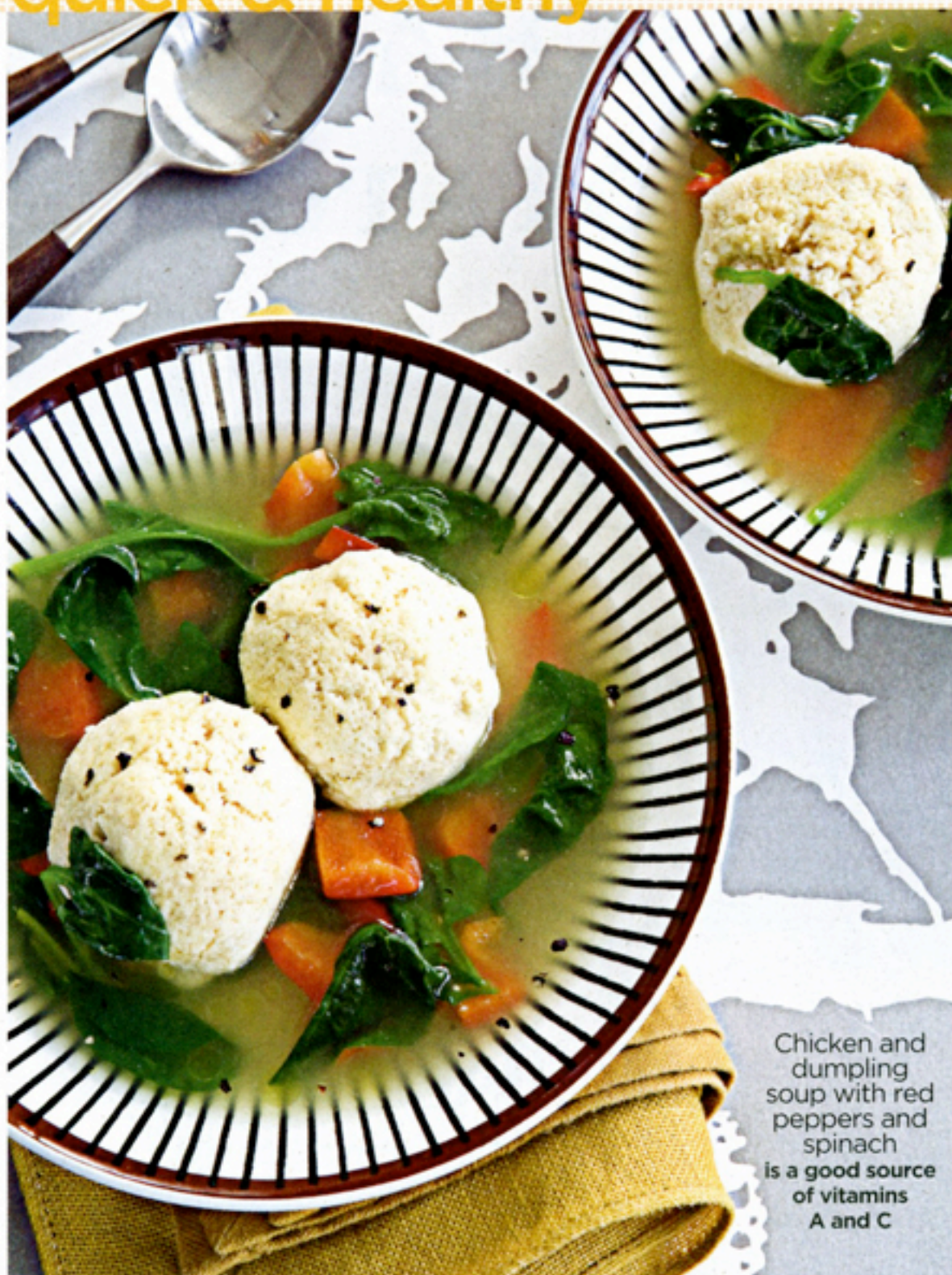
JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE DECIDED TO DROP pounds or go gluten-free doesn't mean you have to give up carb-rich foods, like pancakes and pizza. Instead, you can transform them—and make them healthier in the process—by trading wheat flour for almond flour (simply blanched, ground almonds). You'll get more protein and fiber, plus hefty doses of calcium, magnesium, and antioxidant vitamin E. →

**DIET STRATEGY**  
Make meals more nutritious with almond flour.

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The combo of protein and fiber in pancakes with blueberry-peach sauce will keep you full until lunch!








Chicken and dumpling soup with red peppers and spinach is a good source of vitamins A and C

True, almond flour has about 50 percent more calories than wheat flour and is higher in fat—but that can work to your advantage. The fat is the heart-healthy monounsaturated kind, and almond flour is low on the glycemic index scale—scoring less than 1 versus 70 for whole-wheat flour. That means it's digested slowly, keeping blood sugar levels steady, so you eat less and stay satisfied longer. If you want to improve your health and take a few inches off your waist, give these easy high-protein dishes a try.

## CHICKEN AND DUMPLING SOUP WITH RED PEPPERS AND SPINACH

If you have leftover cooked chicken, toss it into the pot when you add the peppers and spinach.

**Serves 8**

 **Prep time: 30 minutes**  
**Total time: 3½ hours**

- 4 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

- 2 cups blanched almond flour
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 large red pepper, diced
- 2 cups baby spinach, chopped

To make the dumplings, beat eggs, salt, and pepper with an electric mixer in a medium bowl for 2 to 3 minutes or until fluffy. Stir in almond flour and refrigerate mixture for about 3 hours or until dough is firm.

Fill a stockpot with water and heat over high. While waiting for water to



## WHERE THE HECK DO YOU FIND THIS STUFF?

- ✓ Almond flour is sold in health food stores, but you'll pay about \$15 a pound. Get a better deal online at Nuts Online (\$7 per pound; [nutsonline.com](http://nutsonline.com)) or Honeyville Grain (\$29 for five pounds; [honeyvillegrain.com](http://honeyvillegrain.com)).
- ✓ Always buy blanched almond flour; it's better for baking than the unblanched kind or almond meal.
- ✓ Store almond flour in the fridge or freezer and it will keep for six months to a year.

boil, scoop 1 heaping tablespoon of dough into the palm of your hand and roll into a 1½-inch ball to form a dumpling. Place it on a plate and repeat with remaining dough.

When water is boiling, add dumplings and lower heat to medium. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes.

In a separate large pot, bring broth to a simmer. Remove dumplings from water with a slotted spoon and add to broth. Add red pepper and spinach and simmer for about 2 minutes or until spinach is wilted. Ladle 2 to 3 dumplings, chicken broth, and veggies into individual bowls and serve piping hot.


## Nutrition score per serving

(2 cups): 210 calories, 17 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 7 g carbs, 11 g protein, 4 g fiber, 90 mg calcium, 2 mg iron, 297 mg sodium

## ASPARAGUS AND GOAT CHEESE PIZZA

Not an asparagus fan? Use broccoli or red peppers in this dish instead.

**Serves 4**

 **Prep time: 30 minutes**  
**Total time: 60 minutes**



- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup 1 1/2-inch asparagus pieces
- 1 1/2 cups blanched almond flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons sea salt, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon grape seed or canola oil
- 1 large egg
- 7 ounces tomato paste
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 3 ounces goat cheese

Pour olive oil in a sauté pan and heat over medium. When oil is hot, add onion and sauté for 8 to 10 minutes or until soft and translucent. Add asparagus, increase heat to high, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside to cool. Preheat oven to 350°F.

To make the crust, mix almond flour, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and baking

soda in a large bowl. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together oil and egg. Stir wet ingredients into almond flour mixture until thoroughly combined.



Asparagus and goat cheese pizza supplies a third of your daily fiber needs

Cut 2 pieces of parchment paper to the size of a baking sheet. Place the dough between the parchment and use a rolling pin to flatten it into a 10-inch circle, about 1/8 inch thick. Remove top piece of parchment and transfer bottom piece with rolled-out dough onto a baking sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until lightly golden.

While the crust bakes, make the pizza sauce: Bring tomato paste, water, herbes de Provence, remaining salt, and garlic to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until sauce has thickened.

Spread sauce over the crust while the crust is still warm.

Crumble goat cheese evenly over the sauce, then top with onion and asparagus mixture. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes to warm the cheese. Let cool briefly, then cut into 8 slices and serve.

## beyond wheat flour

Branch out and try some of the other super-flours on the market.

BY TRISHA CALVO

### ALMOND FLOUR

# 22

#### GRAMS PROTEIN\*

560 calories  
49 g fat  
19 g carbs  
10 g fiber  
216 mg calcium

#### HOW TO USE IT

Trade equal amounts of almond flour for wheat flour in cookies, cakes, quick breads, and pizza dough, or use half wheat flour and half almond flour.

### CHICKPEA/FAVA BEAN FLOUR

# 19

#### GRAMS PROTEIN

364 calories  
6 g fat  
60 g carbs  
17 g fiber  
105 mg calcium

#### HOW TO USE IT

Try it in meat loaf and meatballs in place of flour or bread crumbs to help hold the ingredients together and add fiber.

### OAT FLOUR

# 15

#### GRAMS PROTEIN

404 calories  
9 g fat  
66 g carbs  
7 g fiber  
55 mg calcium

#### HOW TO USE IT

Oat flour alone can be dense; you'll get a lighter texture if you use it to replace about one-third of the wheat flour in recipes.

### RICE FLOUR

# 6

#### GRAMS PROTEIN

366 calories  
1 g fat  
80 g carbs  
2 g fiber  
10 mg calcium

#### HOW TO USE IT

Rice flour can be grainy, so it's typically combined with potato and tapioca flour (along with xanthan gum) in gluten-free baking.

Almond flour helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar

\*All nutritional values are per 3 1/2 ounces of flour.



## Nutrition score per serving

(2 slices): 483 calories, 35 g fat, 8 g saturated fat, 23 g carbs, 18 g protein, 8 g fiber, 194 mg calcium, 5 mg iron, 1,114 mg sodium

## PANCAKES WITH BLUEBERRY-PEACH SAUCE

Look for light agave nectar in health food stores. It has a more neutral flavor than dark types and tastes more like sugar in baked goods.

**Serves 4**



**Prep time: 5 minutes**

**Total time: 20 minutes**

### FOR THE SAUCE

- 1 1/2 cups frozen blueberries
- 1 cup frozen peach slices
- Pinch of nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot powder
- 1/4 cup water

### FOR THE PANCAKES

- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup light agave nectar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 1/2 cups blanched almond flour
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot powder
- 2 tablespoons grape seed or canola oil

In a small covered saucepan, cook blueberries, peaches, and nutmeg over medium heat for 10 to 20 minutes or until fruit is soft. Mix arrowroot powder into water. Raise heat and whisk the arrowroot liquid into the fruit for about 1 minute or until the mixture is thick and glossy. Set aside to cool as you make the pancakes.

Blend eggs, agave nectar, vanilla, and water in a blender for 1 minute or until smooth. Add almond flour, salt, baking soda, and arrowroot powder. Process until thoroughly combined.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium. Ladle 1 heaping tablespoon batter per pancake onto skillet. Cook for 2 to 5 minutes or until small bubbles form on top. Flip pancakes and cook on the other side for 1 to 2 minutes.

Transfer pancakes to a plate (or use an ovenproof dish and place in a 250°F oven to keep warm until all pancakes are done, if you like). Repeat with remaining batter, then serve topped with warm fruit sauce.

## Nutrition score per serving

(3 pancakes, 1/2 cup sauce): 462 calories, 31 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 38 g carbs, 13 g protein, 7 g fiber, 111 mg calcium, 2 mg iron, 409 mg sodium

**online bonus!**

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