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Substitutes for Almond Butter

Almond Nutrition facts: 190 calories, 18g fat (2g sat fat), 7g protein Almond butter's a good source of omega-6 fatty acids, and a better source of omega-3 fatty acids than peanut butter. **Benefits:** Almonds are the most nutritionally dense nut, meaning they've got the highest concentration of nutrients per calorie and ounce. We're talking potassium, calcium, vitamin E, magnesium, phosphorous, and iron. Other studies have found chowing on almonds (the raw variety, at least) can help lower blood pressure and "bad" cholesterol, also known as LDL [1]. **DIY:** This recipe for raw almond butter requires just almonds, honey, and salt. **Sweet! PB Replacement Recipe:** Instead of a peanut butter banana breakfast smoothie, shake things up with an almond butter smoothie.

Coconut Nutrition facts: 180 calories, 18g fat (16g sat fat), 2g protein

Coconut offers minimal omega-6 and barely any omega-3 fatty acids. **Benefits:** For thousands of years, people have been chowing on this heart-healthy nut that supports the immune system, boosts metabolism, and can even help prevent bacterial infection [2].

Cons: There's not too much protein in a serving of coconut butter and the saturated fat content's pretty high. So be sure to spread a limited amount on fortified bread or another great protein source. **DIY:** Dried, unsweetened coconut's all you need for this simple recipe. **Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe:** Instead of peanut butter pancakes slap the coconut butter version on the table.

Hazelnut Nutrition facts: 180 calories, 17g fat (1g sat fat), 4g protein

Like peanut butter, hazelnuts are a good source of omega-6 fatty acids, but don't offer too much omega-3. **Benefits:** Also known as "filberts," hazelnuts are packed with the good stuff: protein, fiber, vitamin E, copper, and manganese. **Cons:** The problem is a serving of hazelnut butter has about half the amount of protein that peanut butter has, so pair the butter with fortified pasta (see the recipe below) or another protein-packed food item. **DIY:** Hazelnuts and more hazelnuts are all that's necessary for this easy recipe. **Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe:** For a fancy twist on peanut butter pasta, try hazelnut butter pasta instead.

Macadamia Nutrition facts: 230 calories, 24g fat (4g sat fat), 2g protein

Macadamia nuts have a lot more omega-6s than omega-3s, though not quite as much of either fatty acid as peanut butter. **Benefits:** Of all nut varieties, Miss Mary Macadamias contain the greatest concentration of monounsaturated fat (good for the heart). In fact research suggests chowing on macadamia nuts can help prevent coronary artery disease

[3]. Cons: Even though it's the good kind, macadamias are still pretty high in fat, so try not to exceed the 2 TBS serving size. They're also relatively low in protein, so punch up the nutritional value with milk, fortified bread, or even oatmeal. DIY: With just a dash of maple syrup, macadamia nut butter is a tasty paleo treat. PB Replacement Recipe: Make peanut butter cookies a little classier by using macadamia nut butter instead.

Pecan Nutrition facts: 213 calories, 20g fat (2g sat fat), 4g protein

Pecans are packed with about 20 times as much omega-6 as omega-3 fatty acids. Benefits: It's like a vitamin (and mineral) shop in a nutshell. Pecans are packed with vitamins A, B, and E, plus magnesium, potassium, and a ton of fiber. And studies have found pecans can help lower cholesterol levels [4]. Cons: Pecans are a little higher in fat than peanut butter, so consider limiting intake to 2 TBS (as tempting as it is to eat an entire jar in one sitting). DIY: Toast the pecans before blending 'em up; then add a dash of cinnamon and salt. Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe: Peanut butter on toast? So yesterday. Impress the rest of the breakfast table with pecan butter on banana bread.

Pistachio Nutrition facts: 180 calories, 13g fat (1.5g sat fat), 6g protein

Pistachios are also a much better source of omega-6 fatty acids than omega-3s. Benefits: These super-nuts are full of fiber and potassium, and more protein than most other nut varieties. Some research even suggests pistachios can lower cholesterol and boost antioxidant levels [5] [6]. DIY: For a jar-full of protein-packed sweetness, boil pistachios and almonds, then mix them together with a little bit o' sugar. Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe: Try an Italian twist on the classic PB&J with a sandwich made of pistachio butter and dried cherries.

Soy Nutrition facts: 200 calories, 14g fat (2g sat fat), 10g protein

Though a better source of omega-3s than peanut butter, soy nuts are also a better source of omega-6s than omega-3 fatty acids. Benefits: Soy nuts offer a hefty dose of protein (even more than peanut butter!) and all essential amino acids. Plus the isoflavones in soy products may help prevent heart disease and cancer. DIY: Blend those nuts and add a little bit of EVOO for a homemade delicacy. PB Replacement Recipe: Snack-time! Swap peanut butter on toast for soy butter on an English muffin.

Walnut Nutrition facts: 174 calories, 17g fat (10g sat fat), 3g protein

Walnuts are a great source of both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids (though they've got more omega-6s.) Benefits: To the window, to the wal-nuts. Look inside the shell for antioxidants plus vitamins and minerals that can improve blood vessel health and help reduce inflammation. Cons: Walnuts are pretty high in saturated fat and low in protein, so consider limiting the serving size and sprinkling some other protein-power nuts, like pistachios, on top. DIY: Use raw, soaked, or toasted nuts, depending on the level of crunch you crave. Then blend them in a food processor and sprinkle with honey and cinnamon. Yum. Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe: Carrots dipped in walnut butter looks just so much more sophisticated than carrots and a jar of PB.

Seed Butters

Cashew Nutrition facts: 160 calories, 14g fat (4g sat fat), 4g protein

While cashews have slightly more omega-3 power than peanut butter, they don't pack quite as much omega-6. Benefits: Can you ca-shew? Cashews have tons of important vitamins and minerals including iron, magnesium, zinc, copper, phosphorous, and manganese. The nuts may also reduce triglyceride levels, especially important for those with diabetes [7]. Cons: Cashews are a little lacking in the protein department, so be sure to add a glass of skim milk or another source of protein to the meal. DIY: Crush raw cashews in a blender; then add oil, sugar, and salt. PB Replacement Recipe: Tell peanut butter granola bars to take a hike and bring these cherry cashew granola bars on a long trek instead.

Pumpkin Nutrition facts: 180 calories, 14g fat (4g sat fat), 10g protein

Pumpkin seeds pack more omega-6 fatty acids than omega-3s. Benefits: After Halloween has come and gone, this superfood still makes an awesome snack in any form. Its best benefits include a ton of protein (more than peanut butter), fiber, potassium, and beta-carotene, a nutrient associated with boosting the immune system. DIY: Grind up pumpkin seeds, transfer them to a food processor, then add olive oil, honey, and salt. Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe: Orange you glad you woke up for breakfast? Skip the peanuts and spoon a dollop of pumpkin butter in a bowl of oatmeal.

Sesame (Tahini) Nutrition: 170 calories, 16 g fat (2 g sat fat), 6g protein

Like peanut butter, sesame seeds are filled with omega-6 fatty acids, and not so much omega-3. Benefits: Sesame seeds are a great source of nutrients including calcium, magnesium, iron, vitamin B1, and fiber. Plus research suggests the seeds can lower cholesterol levels and help prevent cancer and heart disease [8]. [9]. DIY: Toast the seeds; put them in the food processor; add vanilla extract, salt, and sugar. Voila! Peanut butter replacement recipe: Apples and peanut butter are cute, but grown-ups can snack on fresh fruit and sesame seed butter.

Sunflower Nutrition facts: 180 calories, 16g fat (2g sat fat), 6g protein

Sunflower seeds don't offer much omega-3 fatty acids, but they're brimming with omega-6s. Benefits: Here comes the sun(flower), a great source of magnesium and antioxidant vitamin E. DIY: Toast up those seeds and then blend them in a food processor. Peanut Butter Replacement Recipe: Take peanut butter oatmeal cookies to the next level and try your hand at sunbutter oatmeal cookies.