

S3E48b Transcript

Ask Jack #6

Geoff Allix (Intro): (2s):

Hi, I'm Geoff Allix, host of Living Well with MS family of podcasts from Overcoming MS.

Jack McNulty (Intro): (8s):

Hey everyone, Jack McNulty here. Welcome to another new and exciting season of Ask Jack, a special Living Well with MS podcast Series. I'm excited and honored to answer food and cooking related questions from you, the Overcoming MS community.

Geoff Allix (Intro): (23s):

To submit a question for future episodes of Ask Jack, please email us at podcast@overcomingms.org. That's podcast@overcomingms.org. Please check out this episode show notes at www.overcomingms.org/podcast and dig into additional information and links on what we'll cover. And now let's rev up our culinary curiosity and Ask Jack.

Geoff Allix (46s):

The Living Well with MS podcast family is happy to welcome back Ask Jack for its second season. This episode's topic is replacing eggs and chocolate. Jack has meticulously curated several questions around this topic and it's one even non-chefs can relate to. I mean, eggs and chocolate are the building blocks for so many yummy foods and recipes. But we know from our research, they're not particularly good for people with MS. So, let's find out about healthy alternatives that can stand in without standing out. So welcome back Jack and happy 2022. How's the year started for you?

Jack McNulty (1m 23s):

Great so far, Geoff. It's just fantastic to be back for another year, doing the Ask Jack podcast with you. There's a lot happening in the world of plant-based food and cooking. And as a chef, it's just incredibly exciting. It's a good time to be involved in that aspect of the world. And looking forward to another year.

Geoff Allix (1m 44s):

We have had some changes over the last couple of years with the pandemic. It's become normalized. You know, I live in quite small town, but we still have a choice of restaurants that are plant based. And that certainly wouldn't have been the case five years ago.

Jack McNulty (2m 3s):

Yeah, most definitely. I feel exactly the same way living in Switzerland, where it previously was very difficult to find anything remotely close to plant based. And now there's quite a few choices available. So, that's a good thing.

Geoff Allix (2m 22s):

You are in the home of chocolate.

Jack McNulty (2m 26s):

Chocolate, and cheese, and eggs. And yeah. Everything non-OMS.

Geoff Allix (2m 32s):

So, to go through the questions then. Starting with eggs. Do you have any tips on making a tofu scramble? And the question is I've heard that they are simple to make, but I've never made one. But I'd love to hear your tips on making tofu scramble.

Jack McNulty (2m 55s):

Yeah, well, I definitely have some tips. Like you, I make them fairly regularly myself. It's quite versatile, so you can do a number of different things with it. What I like to do, for the first thing I do is and I think it's really important for successful tofu scramble is beginning with the selecting the right kind of tofu, so that, you know, they can go from

really firm tofu to the so called silken tofu. Very soft, almost custardy like. The one that works the best for tofu scramble, there's something in between. Something on the softer side, not a silken tofu but soft, where you can easily crumble it with your fingers.

Jack McNulty (3m 38s):

And so, that's exactly how I started. I just get the tofu out of the package, drain it from all this liquid, crumble it into a bowl, and then I add in the other flavor ingredients right into a bowl and just sort of mix it all together with my fingers. So, what I use is, I tend to use a tablespoon of Dijon style mustard, I use a little bit of Turmeric. I'm careful with not using too much because I don't want the flavor there, but I want the color. It kind of adds to the whole impression of what you're trying to do. I add a little bit of ground cumin as well but just a little tiny bit.

Jack McNulty (4m 18s):

I think it gives a nice background flavor and a good squeeze of lemon juice along with the seasoning, kala namak, a black salt. And a lot of people might be familiar with it already. But it has a sort of sulfur like flavor associated with it. Kind of reminds you of eggs certainly when you smell it, it does, and it works well within a tofu scramble. So, I get out my pan. I use a stainless-steel pan, but you can do this with nonstick as well, and make sure the pan is hot, not scorching hot. There's nothing in the pan, but just over medium heat.

Jack McNulty (5m 1s):

Get it nice and hot. I add a bit of water, say a quarter cup of water, to the pan, it should immediately sizzle up. And then I add all the contents that were in the bowl with the tofu into the pan. And I just begin, I use a silicone sort of spatula, and I just sort of smash everything together as the water mixes in with the tofu. And I cook it over medium heat for about three to five minutes. Now, sometimes I add additional water as I go along. I don't want it dry. I want it a little bit more on the moist side. And that sort of starts to begin to break down and take on a look very much like scrambled eggs at that point.

Jack McNulty (5m 47s):

I just remove it from the heat after that period of time. Now, you can add additional flavoring at this point. Nutritional yeast is something I usually go with and gives it a little bit of a cheesy flavor. But also, you could whip some spinach into it, have cherry tomatoes in there, maybe some sliced spring onions, things like this. You can just sort of let your imagination run free and create sort of a nice little dish. It looks very similar to scrambled eggs.

Geoff Allix (6m 20s):

Yeah, I know very similar. I think the key for me was the kala namak, which wasn't the easiest thing to find. I did find it from a very large online retailer taking over the world. So, it is available if you search for it. And you know you've got the right stuff because it does smell of eggs.

Jack McNulty (6m 40s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (6m 38s):

And I, yeah, once -- and you're right. The turmeric, if you overdo it, it takes a turmeric flavor but actually you know scrambled eggs doesn't taste like turmeric it is just that yellow color.

Jack McNulty (6m 47s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (6m 47s):

And then really that's just a base and then you can think, "Okay, I'll add some mushrooms, or add some herbs as you would with any scrambled eggs." One thing I would say actually is that friend like the scramble. They're not people with MS. But they don't really like scrambled eggs. And so, they do it without kala namak. And they like it, but you don't have to. We're trying to make it as similar as possible to scrambled eggs.

Jack McNulty (7m 11s):

Yeah, yeah.

Geoff Allix (7m 12s):

But actually, you could make it for months and some people think it's better than scrambled eggs because they're not really keen on the eggy flavor. And so, you don't need to. So, okay. Kala namak is a salt so you can use normal regular salt and then use different flavors, and actually make something that you may prefer. And I think once you've got that base and you can start messing about with say, "Okay, what about a bit more kala namak, bit less, or adding herbs? Or you know..."

Jack McNulty (7m 45s):

Yeah. Adding curry for instance.

Geoff Allix (7m 50s):

Yeah.

Jack McNulty (7m 50s):

You know, there's a lot of different ways you can take it at this point. You can make it a little bit more Mexican, and then you have some breakfast tacos or breakfast burritos, things like that that would work really fine. I think the common mistake that most people make is they choose the tofu that's too hard. They don't use enough moisture as they're cooking the tofu until it gets a little bit rubbery if you don't use enough moisture and really break it down with the moisture and go a little bit too light on the seasoning. Tofu is like a sponge. It will take on a lot of flavor. And I think, you know, you shouldn't be afraid to season it well.

Geoff Allix (8m 34s):

Okay, and I think, yeah, with a bit of toasted sourdough. Perfect. Perfect.

Jack McNulty (8m 43s):

Exactly.

Geoff Allix (8m 44s):

And then you can go all sorts of ways with it as well. Like there's recipes for making fake bacon, liquid smoke, and things like slices of aubergine.

Jack McNulty (8m 58s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (8m 58s):

And you can make a quick breakfast with tomatoes, mushrooms, tofu, sourdough. You know you can make it really healthy. And because a traditional English Breakfast is pretty much one of the unhealthiest meals you can probably eat once you get to the blood pudding,

Jack McNulty (9m 18s):

<inaudible>

Geoff Allix (9m 20s):

The sausages, fried bacon, fried eggs.

Jack McNulty (9m 25s):

Yeah, that's right.

Geoff Allix (9m 25s):

But you can make it really healthy, nutritious.

Jack McNulty (9m 31s):

You can also have them you know, as a light lunch. Tofu scramble as a light lunch, even an early light dinner in the summer works fine. So, you know, you can experiment quite a lot with that technique and deliver some really powerfully flavorful food.

Geoff Allix (9m 53s):

It kala namak. Is it K-A-L-A-N-A-M-A-K? Is that right?

Jack McNulty (9m 55s):

That's correct.

Geoff Allix (9m 56s):

Yeah, that's the thing to look for. You search for that. I'd say that's the key ingredient that tips it into something that tastes like egg.

Jack McNulty (10m 7s):

Yeah, I'll make sure I throw a link on the show notes for that so people can just access it from the show notes and on the website.

Geoff Allix (10m 21s):

Okay. And so, talking about eggs, how would you replace eggs in a cake recipe? Is there a simple direct substitution you can use for eggs and cakes?

Jack McNulty (10m 32s):

Um, well, that's an interesting question. I think, let me just start with why I can't think of another ingredient with so many culinary uses as an egg, which is why there really is no single substitution in recipes for eggs. And I think a successful replacement for an egg whether it's in baking or any other kind of cooking, it requires a basic understanding of what role is that egg playing in the recipe? So, before answering that question, let's just review quickly what an egg does in terms of a recipe.

Jack McNulty (11m 15s):

So, an egg will provide structure. So, the protein once heat is applied will start to coagulate. And it works very similar to gluten in that sense, so it gives anything a little bit of structure. And that's what you're looking for, which is a certain chewiness as well as providing structure, especially in high ratio, baked goods, ones that have a lot of sugar or fat, which tend to make the gluten very weak. An egg will strengthen that and bring it back into a little bit more of a structure and give it a little bit more bite. So, that's one thing an egg will do. Second thing is it actually works as a shortening as well, especially if you're just using the egg yolk, which is where all the fat is in an egg.

Jack McNulty (12m 5s):

And that egg yolk, the fat in the egg yolk will shorten the gluten strands and make whatever you're baking a little bit softer or have a sort of a texture similar to a sponge cake and going in that sort of direction. Eggs also emulsify and bind fats and liquids together. So, think in terms of making some kind of custard or something like this. This is where an egg is very useful in certain types of cooking. Leavening, giving a baked good rise. So that's usually done through the egg white, but just a whipped egg will do the same sort of thing.

Jack McNulty (12m 47s):

And it is basically just incorporating bubbles into the mix that expand when it's heated until you get that nice little rise. Eggs also provide moisture. Most of an egg is just water. I think it's around 65 to 70% of the whole egg is just water. And so, it's going to add a lot of moisture within a cake or other baked goods. Of course, flavor. We talked a little bit about that sulfur like flavor from the kala namak. That comes from cooked egg whites, whereas cooked egg yolks are going to give a sort of richness and that sort of smooth texture on the tongue.

Jack McNulty (13m 27s):

It doesn't add a lot of flavor on the egg yolk part, but just more of a texture sort of thing. And then color and glazing. So, eggs are often used to give that sort of shiny look to any sort of bread or baked good, like a pie dough or something of that sense. So back to the original question about replacing eggs and a cake recipe. And I'm afraid the answer is ultimately, you know, what do you want the cake to be once it's baked? So, I'll give the Swiss answer, it depends.

Jack McNulty (14m 12s):

It's not as simple as adding a fruit puree to replace the eggs, or using a flax egg, or using baking soda with an acidified nondairy milk or something of this nature. Each of these kinds of solutions contribute something different. So, it's moisture binding leavening. And so, I think ultimately, the answer is it's combining several techniques to achieve whatever it is you're trying to achieve or recreate in a recipe. And that may involve some experimentation, playing around with different formulas. But it's also fun. It's a great way to learn about ingredients, and how they work in a recipe.

Jack McNulty (14m 57s):

So, I sort of encourage that. The key is understanding what the basic choices for each role are, which I'll include in the show notes so people can refer to that.

Geoff Allix (15m 6s):

So on the OMS diet, egg whites are approved, aren't they? You can use egg whites?

Jack McNulty (15m 11s):

That's right.

Geoff Allix (15m 12s):

And the egg white sounds like it does quite a lot of the action. And the roles of an egg are a distinct thing. So, there's the egg white and the egg yolk.

Jack McNulty (15m 24s):

That's right.

Geoff Allix (15m 25s):

We're using the egg white. It can actually do a lot of that binding, but it's not going to do the shortening side of it.

Jack McNulty (15m 34s):

That's right. There's no fat in an egg white. And that's why it's ultimately allowed on the OMS diet. There's some conflicting evidence out there in terms of, are there other things in the egg white, that might be harmful. But I think ultimately, the use of egg whites, depending on your view as to whether you want to use animal products at all. But ultimately, you know, using egg whites is fine in small amounts.

Geoff Allix (16m 11s):

And so, the egg, is there something that would replace the egg yolk action, specifically?

Jack McNulty (16m 18s):

Again, that would probably get a little bit more toward, what do you want to try to achieve? So, if we look at the structure of an egg yolk, basically, you're going to be looking at about 70% of it is water. So, I think, it's around, if I get my numbers correct, is around 12% is fat in an egg yolk. And so, a good amount of that is saturated fat as well. And then there are other things within the egg yolk to play an important role. So, it has lecithin in the egg yolk itself, which is an emulsifier.

Jack McNulty (17m 8s):

And it also has minerals and salts and things like that in smaller percentages. So, it emulsifies, and it adds fat. It does two things. So, it's going to bind liquids and fats together, as well as create a texture, especially if it's mixed with some kind of wheat flour, that's going to be very soft and spongy like.

Geoff Allix (17m 28s):

Okay, so if we are, in some situations going to use egg white, and we have an egg in the recipe. And we say, "Okay, well, we know that the egg white is doing the heavy lifting of what's required here." So, how much egg white would you use to replace an egg? Would you just say, "Oh, well, that one egg white is all I need? Or would you double it or...?"

Jack McNulty (17m 60s):

Yeah, it's not quite that easy. I think, if you go and look at especially a lot of food science books or cooking books and things like that, where this topic comes up, the consensus isn't around how many egg whites will replace one whole egg. So, if you wanted to do that substitution in a recipe, that's basically what you're looking at. However, you have to take into consideration a couple other factors. First of all, if you're just using just the egg white, you're not going to have the fat within the recipe. So, the ultimate texture of, let's say you're making a cake, and you're using just the egg white, it's going to be firmer than something that has the whole egg in it which will be softer.

Jack McNulty (18m 45s):

So, it would be the difference between say, an angel food cake, if you're familiar with that, which is just egg white flour and sugar. It's relatively firm in its texture, quite light but firm versus something like a sponge cake, where it's going to be crumbly, and a little bit softer. And that's going to be using a whole egg in it. So that's the basic difference that's going to come up. So, if you wanted to recreate that sponge like texture, go ahead and use your two egg whites to one egg formula, but add about a teaspoon of fat, your choice, into the formula as well, per egg that you're replacing.

Jack McNulty (19m 34s):

So, if you're using two egg whites to replace one egg, you're only going to need one teaspoon of either oil, or something like a cashew butter, or something like this. It's going to provide that fat that's going to help with creating that soft texture.

Geoff Allix (19m 48s):

Okay, so it doesn't... so it's, the fact you're not using saturated fat won't cause a problem. But we do need to get some fats in there?

Jack McNulty (19m 54s):

Exactly. Of course, you can choose to just eliminate the fat altogether, that's fine.

Geoff Allix (19m 57s):

But that changes sort of...

Jack McNulty (19m 58s):

But for those that want to do that, you can do that. But just understand the texture is going to be fundamentally a little bit different.

Geoff Allix (20m 8s):

Okay, we had a question about egg replacer. So, Courtney from Portland, Oregon, wants to know if there's a healthy substitute for eggs such as Just Egg, which is the closest thing she's found to scrambled eggs, not having tried tofu scramble. But she's concerned about some of the ingredients in it. So, there's a lot of canola oil. And it's supposed to be cooked with a high temperature. So, any ideas or is there any egg replacement or egg substitutes that are out there that would work effectively?

Jack McNulty (20m 42s):

Yeah, I saw that question as it came across. I'm not familiar with Just Egg. Just briefly familiar with some of them that are out there. Hasn't really come to my part of the world yet. But I'm sure it's going to invade the supermarket shelves at some point very soon, or something very similar. So, I had a look. I went into their website and had a quick little peek. So, it's mung bean based instead of soybean. It's made from mung beans. And it's sort of what you would expect from a food company on their website. Which means they do whatever possible to sort of hide the ingredients from you.

Jack McNulty (21m 28s):

You have to dig quite a bit. There's a lot of fluff and marketing terminology on there, and a lot of claims on their website. So, all of those things are reason enough for me to be on my guard. And it's probably a good idea to then try and figure out what the ingredients are. So, I did find them eventually. And basically, it's a lot of stuff that is hard to pronounce. And I'm not sure exactly what they all are. But you can tell they've been sort of carefully constructed.

Jack McNulty (22m 8s):

So, it's water mung bean protein isolate, which means that's a pretty processed version of the mung bean. It does have, they say, expeller pressed canola oil. So that's a nice way of saying that it's not necessarily a healthy canola oil. So, it's going to be something not good in that sense. And then a bunch of other flavoring, and lecithin, and salt, and sugars, and on and on it goes. So it's probably much better to refer to the beginning of our conversation and make your scrambled eggs with something like tofu and a few ingredients that you have a good control over.

Jack McNulty (22m 49s):

I think the lesson here is a simple reminder that reading labels is absolutely necessary to avoid all the marketing hype, you know. And ultimately, a good reminder that we're 100% responsible for whatever we put in our body.

Geoff Allix (23m 6s):

And tofu scramble is really not hard to make.

Jack McNulty (23m 10s):

No.

Geoff Allix (23m 10s):

That synthesis is easy.

Jack McNulty (23m 12s):

Yeah, yeah.

Geoff Allix (23m 13s):

Unless you get tofu that's too firm, as you mentioned, because that's really difficult to crumble. What if you got the right sort of tofu and you've sourced your kala namak from somewhere, then it's easy.

Jack McNulty (23m 21s):

Exactly.

Geoff Allix (23m 21s):

And there's a couple of other things that came up. So, one was custard. So, can you make an OMS friendly custard? Because that is... is very much egg and milk, in my opinion. I haven't had custard since following OMS. And I think that's, is that a global term? I mean, I think it's <crosstalk>

Jack McNulty (23m 43s):

Oh, I was just going to say. I think first thing we need to do is define the term.

Geoff Allix (23m 49s):

Yeah. Okay. So in the UK custard would be a sweet thing you that would have as effectively a sweet sauce on a <inaudible>

Jack McNulty (23m 60s):

No. And I think it has more to do with the actual texture. So, on one side of the world, you're going to define custard as something that's fat, something like a crème brûlée or a flan, or even within a quiche. Something like this where basically it's an egg and milk mixture that's been set. It's been cooked in the oven, and it comes to a firm or semi firm consistency. Custard in another part of the world, probably where they drive on an opposite of the world, it is going to mean more of a sauce that you're going to have with a dessert or cake.

Geoff Allix (24m 32s):

Yeah, we have a custard tart, which would be what you were saying.

Jack McNulty (24m 39s):

Exactly.

Geoff Allix (24m 39s):

Is it pastel de nata or is that the right term? In Lisbon, they have, like a really famous custard tart.

Jack McNulty (24m 46s):

I don't know. I've never been to Lisbon. But as it turns out, I'm going there in a couple of weeks. So, I'll get back to you on that.

Geoff Allix (24m 53s):

Yeah, a separate subject, then you must get to Lisbon. It's amazing place. But you won't be able to have the pastel de nata which is very fantastic.

Jack McNulty (25m 1s):

Yeah, exactly.

Geoff Allix (25m 2s):

And so, yes. So, let's say, I mean, they're essentially the same thing though that the ingredients are really the same, so.

Jack McNulty (25m 10s):

Yeah, kinda. It just depends on the amount of liquid that they use, and then how the heat is applied to it. So, let's talk about two of them. So, in the OMS world, you can recreate both. And so starting with the sauce first, more sauce-based, and that's going to be something like a crème anglaise.

Geoff Allix (25m 32s):

Mm-hmm.

Jack McNulty (25m 33s):

Which I think is the official sort of culinary term for that. Um, now that's mostly going to be, in the plant-based world that's mostly going to be made with cashew nuts. That's what you see the most. And so, it's really simple to do. It doesn't involve any cooking whatsoever. It just involves a high-speed blender, which is very useful, especially for the OMS lifestyle. So, you're just taking soaked cashew nuts, and you're putting them in the blender with a liquid. So, it can be water, it can be some kind of nondairy milk, it can be soya yogurt, or something like that. But that's basically it along with some flavoring. So, I always flavor with a little bit of vanilla, and then some kind of sweetener, if you wish, if it wants to be a sweet sauce in the end.

Jack McNulty (26m 18s):

You can use anything from sugar to some kind of syrup like maple syrup, or agave syrup, or something of this nature. And basically, it's just a matter of blending it all up. And you adjust the consistency with the amount of liquid that you're putting into the blender. It should go around nice and smooth. In the end, it should be anywhere from a really thick kind of cream to something a little bit runnier that you might want to have on the dessert plate. So, it's fantastic with cakes, pies. I like having it with strudel coming from this part of the world. It's a really amazing way to do it.

Jack McNulty (26m 58s):

A set custard, on the other hand is a little bit of a different ballgame. And so that's going to be depending on what you want to actually set, and how you want to do it, and what other ingredients are in there. And so, it's a little bit like the cake discussion that we had earlier, you kind of have to play around a little bit with the various proportions or ingredients that you're doing. So, my favorite, I use a combination. I like using a soft silken tofu at this point. Now, this is the kind that's very soft, the tofu.

Jack McNulty (27m 39s):

That's going to add quite a lot of protein to the mix. And with that, I'm going to sometimes use a flour, or some starch base. Now, I use a lot commercially available egg replacers. But I'm pretty careful about those and I read the ingredients. Most egg replacers on the market, commercially available powdered egg replacers are basically going to be a mixture of starches. And that's really all they are. And sometimes they have a little bit of baking powder in them. Sometimes they have a little bit of turmeric in it to give it a little bit of color. And basically, you're just taking that starch and you're mixing it with a liquid, letting it sit for about five minutes, and then mixing it together with the silken tofu.

Jack McNulty (28m 24s):

And that kind of gets you really close to a blended egg. And what's interesting is when you put that into an oven and combine it with other ingredients, it's going to set up like a custard. So, I have different ratios depending on what I'm doing. So, making something like a quiche. I'm going to use quite a bit more silken tofu. So, I use about 12 ounces or around 350 grams. I use a tablespoon of egg replacer. I do use a little bit of flour in that mix, and I add some starch along with some soya milk just to balance the consistency of it.

Jack McNulty (29m 6s):

And that's it. And I mix it with my vegetables and whatnot, put it in the pie shell and bake it in the oven. If I'm doing something that's going to have a starchier ingredient consistency, something like a Spanish tortilla. For those that aren't familiar with that, that's basically just potatoes that have been set with some kind of custard. And so, in this particular case, I'm using less of the silken tofu, a little bit more of starch. And I'm just using corn starch in this case, and a little bit of soy milk. And of course, I flavor it also, a little bit with the kala namak, like we've discussed earlier.

Jack McNulty (29m 48s):

And that binds together with the starchiness and the proteins within the potatoes to create a really nice tight consistency that's very, very similar to a tortilla that's made with a normal egg. I'll be sure to include a link where you can get free access to a recipe on that in the show notes.

Geoff Allix (30m 9s):

Are you using something?

Jack McNulty (30m 10s):

On the dessert side, just real quick. On the dessert side, if you're using something you mentioned, like a rhubarb custard earlier, that provides, or like creates a different sort of problem because rhubarb is highly acidic. And acids tend to be a problem with starch when you're setting them. And this is why you don't want to use something like a corn starch, or a wheat starch or something of this nature. Tapioca starch in this particular case works the best in an acidic environment. And so, I'm combining the tapioca starch with the silken tofu.

Jack McNulty (30m 52s):

And that sets really nice. And I do that exact same method in creating something like a lemon curd. So, it's possible to create all of these various delicious desserts, custard base using various techniques.

Geoff Allix (31m 3s):

And on a slightly different note, could you tell us a bit about aquafaba? So, what it is? And how you would use it?

Jack McNulty (31m 12s):

Sure. aquafaba, for those that don't know, it's basically just a leftover liquid from mostly cooking chickpeas. So, you can do it with other beans, but it's mostly used with chickpeas. So, there's two ways to get it. Either cook your own chickpeas and save the liquid and reduce it down to the right consistency is a little bit more complicated. Or you just simply get a can of chickpeas from your supermarket. Make sure it's not heavily salted, and basically just drain it but use that liquid and that should be fine. Beginners, if you're not familiar with using aquafaba, that's the place to start.

Jack McNulty (31m 55s):

Just go get a can of chickpeas and go from there. So aquafaba is used in a lot of ways. You can use it basically as a liquid because the protein structure is very similar to egg white. It will also work as a binder when you're using it in a recipe. And so, you can make things sort of like a vegan mayonnaise. So, it's going to bind and emulsify similar to egg whites in combining the oil that you're going to use as well as the aquafaba and create that sort of familiar egg, or egg-based vegan mayonnaise.

Jack McNulty (32m 36s):

So, you can also whip it into peaks, soft peaks, basically. And once you do that, then you can fold it into batter to make a lighter type of batter such as pancakes or even in cakes. I've done it also in cakes, and that sort of thing. Once you whip it in, it will collapse a little bit, that's natural with aquafaba. But it does add a lot more air to whatever you're particularly baking or cooking. Or you can whip it into a stiff peak and actually make merengues from it. Have you ever tried that, Geoff?

Geoff Allix (33m 6s):

With aquafaba? No.

Jack McNulty (33m 7s):

Yeah. It's really fascinating. The merengues are almost identical to an egg white based merengue. And as it turns out, they keep quite long.

Geoff Allix (33m 15s):

I mean, I still use egg whites. So, I would tend to agree, you know.

Jack McNulty (33m 18s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (33m 19s):

Yeah, I'm become a bit of an expert separating eggs out using –

Jack McNulty (33m 21s):

Yeah. What do you do, just out of curiosity? What do you do with <crosstalk>

Geoff Allix (33m 30s):

I use two halves of the shell. It comes with its own tool to do it. So, I just cracked the egg and then transfer backwards and forwards from the two halves of the shell. Each time you transfer a bit more egg white, drops down, and you keep the egg yolk, and then ultimately just throw away the egg yolk and the shell.

Jack McNulty (33m 47s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (33m 48s):

And leave. And then occasionally, you make a mistake, and you cut the egg yolk when you're doing that and have to start again.

Jack McNulty (33m 58s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (33m 59s):

Very straightforward.

Jack McNulty (33m 60s):

The thing with egg and aquafaba. The common mistake that people make is they try to whip up either by hand or they don't whip it long enough. So, it takes a little longer to whip it up as opposed to an egg white. And you want to start the aquafaba without anything else. So typically, with egg white, you know a little bit of salt kind of helps strengthen an egg white and when you're whipping it up, and sometimes cream of tartar is an ingredient that goes in and just gives a little bit of acid that sort of helps create a strong sort of meringue with egg whites.

Jack McNulty (34m 49s):

You don't want to do that with aquafaba. You can add those ingredients after it's formed a sort of soft or medium soft peak. And otherwise at the beginning, you're just going to be fruitlessly, whipping, and whipping going, "What is this about all this aquafaba?" But interestingly, it doesn't have any real bean flavor when you cook it which is really fascinating.

Geoff Allix (35m 18s):

So on to chocolate. So, a lot of people have chocolate cravings and looking for OMS friendly ways to satisfy their chocolate craving. So, I mean the chocolate is sort of many things. There's not a problem with the actual cacao part of the chocolate. It's the fats, isn't it, like in the cocoa solids that is the issue.

Jack McNulty (35m 38s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (35m 39s):

So, do you have any recommendations to satisfy a chocolate craving and following the OMS diet?

Jack McNulty (35m 48s):

Sure, yeah, cravings are, you know, that's a difficult junction in anybody going through a lifestyle change. Cravings for cheese or chocolate or any other kind of snack, it's not easy to eliminate. Those are really just about changing your behavior, because they usually involve some kind of trigger. So, with chocolate, it's often a reward of some kind. Maybe you've gone through a lot of stress, and you're rewarding yourself that day for saying, "Oh, I made it through the day. I'm going to have a bite of chocolate or something like that." It's comforting. But it's also potentially quite harmful to do that.

Jack McNulty (36m 27s):

So, with chocolate, cacao powder or cocoa powder, however you want to go with the term there, is the most obvious substitution because it is in essence chocolate at its core. It just doesn't have the majority of the fat that's left in it. And so, that's the best way. And probably the easiest way to sort of transition is to just make things with cacao instead of melted chocolate. Another thing is that people tend to go with chocolate bars or something like that. So, there are alternatives, you know. I've heard people say, "I like to have a naked bar instead of a chocolate bar, or some kind of energy bar, or something like this that has a little cacao in it with dates, or prunes, or any of a number of different ways." So, there are things that you can do.

Jack McNulty (37m 28s):

I think, interestingly, once you've been on the lifestyle bandwagon for a while, as it were, that these things become less and less influential in your life. You just tend to not necessarily fall to the cravings any longer, you know. You just kind of move on from it a little bit. Or you figured out other ways to satisfy a sweet tooth. For me, I'm an admitted sweet tooth person. But I've noticed that over the years, that's waned considerably. I don't really have the need to just have a lot of sweet things. In fact, now, when I do have something, it's just almost overwhelmingly sweet and I don't appreciate it any longer. I'd rather have something else.

Jack McNulty (38m 8s):

Give me a bite a carrot instead of a chocolate at that.

Geoff Allix (38m 13s):

<unintelligible> but I think the same with cheese, I think I'm just saying in the UK, I know what I like. And I like what I know that you you're just familiar with foods. And once you change your diet, it doesn't take very long, and I don't have any cravings for cheese now. And similarly, chocolate.

Jack McNulty (38m 37s):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (38m 37s):

I mean, I have cacao powder in the cupboard. I rarely use it. And I think there's a few related questions, actually. But there's a mention of difference between cocoa powder and cacao powder. We've definitely covered this in a previous episode.

Jack McNulty (38m 54s):

Yeah, yeah, just a real quick answer on that. There is no difference. They're identical.

Geoff Allix (39m 5s):

Yeah.

Jack McNulty (39m 5s):

The one thing that you should know about the two is that when, well not the two, but they are the same. But in terms of baking, there is something to know about cocoa powder. And the major differences are that there's the Dutch process, which is mostly European cocoa powder versus non-Dutch process. And that does have a bearing on how you bake. Now, Dutch process means that cocoa has been treated with an alkali. So, it's darker, it's smoother, it dissolves quicker in liquids. Whereas a natural cocoa is somewhat acidic. So, in baking, what that means is, the leavener of choice is going to be different.

Jack McNulty (39m 47s):

So, with something that's non-Dutch, you can get away with just using baking powder. Versus... I'm sorry, with a non-Dutch you can use baking soda, which reacts with the acid, the natural acid in cocoa. Whereas, with a Dutch process, you're not going to have that acidic quality or you're going to need something like a baking powder that doesn't necessarily need acid in the recipe to react. And so that's going to be your big differences deciding which one to go with there.

Geoff Allix (40m 19s):

And there's a question from Fran in New Zealand, about cacao nibs. Are they a fine to use?

Jack McNulty (40m 33s):

Well, yeah, cacao nibs are basically going to be the shelled portion of the cacao bean that's been harvested. Most cacao nibs are going to be roasted. So, it's very unusual to find an unroasted cacao nib. If you can, that's the best to get. But on the other side of the coin, that's going to be the most difficult to eat because it will be very astringent. It won't taste very good. But it's going to have all the nice health qualities of a lot of flavonoid molds in it and all of the antioxidant properties.

Jack McNulty (41m 13s):

As soon as you roast it and start processing that bean, those things are going to start going away. And so, a cacao nib or cocoa nib, however you want to pronounce it is probably fine on the OMS diet in smaller amounts. And the thing to consider is, it still has all the fat in it from the cocoa bean, right? And so the cocoa bean, or cacao bean is going to be about 50% fat, which is a considerable amount and about half of that fat is going to be saturated. So even if you're talking about, you know, 25 grams of cacao nibs sprinkled on your muesli or something, is that you're getting about 12-13 grams of fat in that case in about six or seven grams of saturated fat.

Jack McNulty (42m 4s):

So, it may seem like, oh, that's something that's quite healthy for you. But on the other hand, just be aware, there's still quite a lot of fat in that. Taken in smaller portions and eaten occasionally is probably fine on the OMS diet.

Geoff Allix (42m 22s):

And I think you've mentioned about chocolate substitutions. I mean, you mentioned naked bars. And there are quite a wide range of similar bars. And is it just a matter of checking ingredients or saturated fat levels?

Jack McNulty (42m 40s):

Yeah, it is. One thing that people often turn to is carob. So carob is basically the powder form of Locust bean gum. It's a kind of route, and it's going around the Mediterranean. It's sweeter than cacao and doesn't have all the same properties as heavy caffeine, for instance. It's not going to have this much in terms of antioxidants and all those other things that you might have in cacao powder. It will be high in fiber, high in protein as well. And when used in baking and just substituted in identical amounts with cacao powder, you can get something that's reasonably close and for some people that works, it's something different to try.

Geoff Allix (43m 30s):

And as a final question, the new OMS book, The Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis Handbook, was recently released. And we actually had an episode with the co-editors Professor George Jelinek and Associate Professor Sandra Neate. But there's lots of contributors to the OMS Handbook and contributing editors, and you are one of them. So, could you tell us a bit about the project and your part in it?

Jack McNulty (44m 2s):

Well, yeah, thanks Geoff for bringing that up. It was an incredible experience and honor to work on this important project, and especially with so many knowledgeable professionals worldwide. It's an amazing book. And in my mind, I don't think there's any doubt it offers fabulous advice to anyone with MS or living with someone who has MS. But I also think it's more than just another book about MS. It's a book about how to change existing lifestyles and reap the inevitable benefits that come from healthy lifestyle changes. These experts in various fields from meditation to, well, I can say cooking, if you will, but also on vitamin D and exercise, and on and on.

Jack McNulty (44m 54s):

It does really contribute an amazing amount of information and provide a lot of guidance as well as hope for people. I was almost speechless when I got to go through the book and start reading some of the chapters. It's fantastic.

Geoff Allix (45m 9s):

Brilliant. With that, I'd like to thank you very much for your contribution today talking about egg and chocolate replacements. And I'm certain there's many people out there who are going to be happily baking, and certainly making breakfast with a scrambled tofu using the information from this episode. And we look forward to welcoming you back in May for the next episode of Ask Jack. And we'd be very interested if you've got any questions for Ask Jack, you can submit them to podcast@overcomingms.org. So if you have any cooking questions, we would be very happy to receive them.

Geoff Allix (45m 49s):

And until then, happy OMS cooking and eating. And thank you very much, Jack.

Jack McNulty (45m 54s):

Thanks, Geoff. It was a brilliant conversation. Remember, be sure to check the OMS website to get the show notes from this podcast. And I'll make sure to include links for more in-depth understanding of these topics, as well as a few recipe ideas. I look forward to seeing you again in May for our next episode. Get those questions in, as soon as possible.

Geoff Allix (46m 17s):

Thanks for listening to this episode of Ask Jack. Please check out this episode's show notes at www.overcomingms.org/podcast where you'll find all sorts of useful links and bonus information. If you'd like to submit a question for a future episode of Ask Jack, please email us at podcast@overcomingms.org. You can also subscribe to Living Well MS on your favorite podcast platform, so you never miss an episode of any of our podcasts. Ask Jack is kindly supported by a grant from the Happy Charitable Trust. If you'd like to support the Overcoming MS charity and help keep our podcast advertising free, you can donate online at www.overcomingms.org/donate.

Geoff Allix (47m 3s):

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