

## **Vegan Brazilian Meal Plan**

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Maybe I am biased, but in my opinion Brazilian food is the best in the world. It is true that Brazil has a very meat-based culture; however, at the same time, fruits and edible plants are very easy to get. Fresh vegetables and fruits are commonly found as street food at stands and fruit can be obtained from fruit trees on the streets. Meat is simple to replace in Brazilian dishes. Several kinds of soy meat, mushrooms, jackfruit, vegan bacon, eggplant, and other foods can be used in Brazilian dishes in place of meat. Dairy can be replaced by plant-based products made from cashews, almonds, Brazil nuts, other nuts, or soy beans. The most common commercial plant milk is made from soy and the second most common is made from almonds.

Brazilians are very good at being creative. In terms of cuisine, they are great (or terrible, if you are very nationalistic about your food) at creating new versions of typical dishes from all over the world. For example, there are sweet sushi; sushi with cream cheese; pizza with stroganoff; ketchup on pizza; chocolate pizza; pineapple pizza; filled croissants; and hot dogs filled with mashed potatoes, sausage, potato sticks, peas, tomatoes, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and sauce.

Each culture has its own eating habits, which includes the meal timetable. In Brazil, breakfast is usually at 6:30 or 7 a.m. and it is usually a lighter meal. Around 9 or 10 a.m., there is a small snack. Lunch is the main meal and is around 12:00 or 1 p.m. At 3 or 4 p.m. it is common to have a little snack. In the evening, some people just like to have a sandwich or something like that while others eat dinner around 7 p.m.

Since Brazil is a very large country, and has many cultures, each region has its particular meals. Actually, that is something some regions compete about. For example, São Paulo and Northeast both claim couscous. Minas Gerais is known for having the best meals but is very milk-based. Cuisine from Goiás is similar to Minas Gerais, because of the history of those regions. And if there is something that really is common to all Brazilians, it is rice and beans. In the meal plan below I tried to put a sample of traditional foods from each region. I hope that you have the opportunity to try a bit of each piece of the country on your plate.

*See meal plan on next page.*

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Breakfast</b>	Roll with vegan butter Papaya cubes Fresh orange juice Sliced vegan cheese	Northeastern corn couscous Coffee or yerba-mate tea	Tapioca with guacamole Plant milk	Toasted sliced bread with vegan cream cheese Banana smoothie Vegan cheese with goiabada	Breakfast cereal with bananas and plant milk and Brazil nuts
<b>Snack</b>	Pastel de palmito Coffee	Mix of peanuts, baru nuts and cashew nuts	Mango with vegan yogurt	Vegan bolinho de chuva Fennel tea	Potato bread Pineapple juice
<b>Lunch</b>	Moqueca de banana da terra White rice Farofa de mandioca Paçoquinha	Rice with pequi Cooked pumpkin Sautéed okra Tutu Fried mandioca Salad with broccoli, sautéed kale, grated carrot and tomato vinaigrette Ata	Vegan carreteiro rice Polenta Pinto beans Sweet potato Salad (tomato, lettuce, grated carrot) Tamarind juice Bananinha	Vegan couscous from São Paulo Vegan tropeiro beans Brown rice French fries Green salad	Vegan feijoada
<b>Snack</b>	Vegan pamonha	Açaí with granola	Vegan pão de “queijo” Coffee	Coxinha of jackfruit meat Fresh passion fruit juice	Guava
<b>Dinner</b>	Corn stew	Bean Stew	Pasta with vegan meatballs and tomato sauce	Pumpkin Quibebe	Vegan pizza*

This general meal plan was created to showcase Brazilian foods that are, or could be modified to be vegan. Not all aspects of the meal were included. Nutritional adequacy was not assessed and the meal plan will not meet the nutritional needs of every reader. This meal plan is not intended to provide personal medical advice. Medical advice should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

As most foods in the above meal plan have Brazilian names, I am including a glossary.

### Glossary:

**Açaí** = a Brazilian fruit cultivated predominantly in the Amazon region. In that region they eat it as a purée with fish and “farinha de mandioca” (a flour made from manioc). But in other regions, it is common to eat açaí with sweet foods. You can eat the cold açaí purée with granola and, if you wish, can add other fruits like sliced bananas or strawberries. Or just try the purée.

**Ata** = also called pinha, fruta-do-conde or atemoia. It is a sweet fruit. It is green, round but with protrusions. It is soft, and you open it easily with your hands and eat the juicy white pulp that

surrounds the seeds.

**Bananinha** = a candy made of bananas and sugar. It's easy to find in every grocery store, snack bar, supermarket or bakery, even in some drugstores. It is inexpensive and comes in a rectangular shape.

**Baru nuts** = a nut from the state of Goiás in Cerrado Bioma. It is sold toasted and can be peeled before eating.

**Bean Stew** = a classic dish from Brazilian cuisine. It is a thick soup made of cooked beans (usually pinto or black beans), oil, and spices and it is mixed in a blender.

**Bolinho de chuva** = a sweet dish of Portuguese heritage. It reminds us of grandma's food for grandchildren. It is very easy to make. It's a little fluffy cake in the shape of a raindrop that is fried and then rolled in a mix of sugar and cinnamon. The cakes are made of flour, sugar, baking powder, and conventionally, eggs and cow's milk. It is very simple to make a vegan version using flour, baking powder, sugar, and water to make the dough. It is more common to have it in the afternoon, but it is up to you.

**Carreteiro rice** = a typical rice dish from the Brazilian South Region made with rice and different kinds of meats, tomato, cilantro, parsley, onion, garlic, and spices. The meat can be replaced by soy-based meat and vegan bacon.

**Corn stew** = a thick soup made of blended corn and spices.

**Coxinha of jackfruit meat** = coxinha is the most loved national salty snack. It is originally from São Paulo. It is made of a cooked flour dough (or potato dough), filled with shredded chicken and then fried. The most delicious vegan version is made by replacing the chicken with jaca (jackfruit). When jaca is shredded and cooked, the taste and texture are the same as chicken. You definitely can't leave Brazil without trying it.

**Farofa de mandioca** = roasted cassava/manioc flour

**Feijoada** = one of the national dishes of Brazil, a typical meal for Friday's or Saturday's lunch, while you listen to samba or pagode music. Its origin is Portuguese and African. It is a thick soup that consists of cooked black beans with bay leaves, and many different parts of a pig. A vegan version uses carrots, potatoes, and small chunks of coconut and possibly tofu instead of pork. Feijoada is served with these side dishes: farofa de mandioca white rice, braised collard greens, and sliced oranges.

**Fried mandioca** = mandioca, in English known as manioc or cassava, is a long root, grown originally by indigenous people. There are many ways to eat it; this is the fried option.

**Goiabada** = a solid sweet made of guava, in a rectangle shape, like a soft little brick. You slice it to eat it. In English you may know it by the name guava paste.

**Moqueca de banana da terra** = a typical dish from Pará, Bahia and Espírito Santo, but is also common in the coastal states in the northeast. It has an African influence and it's a kind of soup with a very particular taste (due to coconut milk, spices, herbs, and dendê oil). The conventional dish is made with seafood. A vegan version is made with a kind of banana called banana da terra (earth banana), which is more firm and doesn't fall apart in the soup.

**Northeastern corn couscous** = a dish made from corn flour which is steamed. It can be sliced and used in place of bread.

**Paçoquinha** = a very common candy made of ground peanuts, sugar, and salt. Originally it was from the countryside; now it is sold all over the country.

**Pamonha** = a food loved by people from Goiás, also Minas Gerais and in a town from the São Paulo countryside (Piracicaba). But in Goiás, where I come from, it is very popular. Probably it has an indigenous origin. There are community events to prepare it together. It is made of a corn dough with a filling. The dough is wrapped in a corn leaf. Pamonha can be salty or sweet and may contain meat. Probably you will not find a vegan one because in the middle they put a piece of cheese. If you want to try a vegan pamonha, you can order a vegan one the day before, so they can prepare it for you (it takes a long time to do it). And one tip: Check if it was prepared only with vegetable oil (not animal fat); most of them are made with vegetable oil.

**Pão de queijo** = also called Brazilian cheese bread. Another food from Minas Gerais. It is a salty baked cheese ball made of sour cassava starch, egg, cheese, oil, and milk. There is a vegan version that can be made of sweet and bitter cassava starches, more oil than the conventional version, and water. A vegan version can also be made of potatoes or other tubers instead of cassava but cassava is better. Other versions use plant-based cheese. You can prepare it by yourself or be fortunate to find the frozen ones in some supermarkets and bake them at home. Brazilian vegans also like to call them “bread without cheese” or “kiss bread” (kiss in Portuguese is “beijo” a similar word to “queijo” - cheese)

**Pastel de palmito** = pastel is a fried pastry which can have many different fillings. A good vegan option is the one with hearts of palm.

**Pequi** = a fruit from Cerrado, found in Goiás (specially) and Minas Gerais, that appears during the spring. It is eaten only when cooked. The pit inside the fruit has spines on it, be careful to avoid the spines when eating it. The taste and the smell are strong. The world is divided between those who love pequi and those who hate it.

**Polenta** = of Italian origin, and more common in South Brazil, it is a savory dish made of cornmeal. You can eat it like porridge or fried in rectangles.

**Potato bread** = despite the potato being from South America, potato bread was created in Europe (most say it was created in France). Brazilian potato bread is different from potato bread from other countries, including Ireland. It is round, fluffy, can be filled or even be used to make sandwiches. In Brazil, potatoes can be replaced by other roots, like cassava or yam, for instance. The vegan recipe usually is also gluten-free and can be filled with vegan cream cheese, vegan cheese, broccoli, or plant-based meat.

**Pumpkin Quibebe** = is a traditional dish of Brazilian cuisine, from African influence. It is a rustic purée made of mashed pumpkin with spices. To be more Brazilian you can use “neck pumpkin,” which is originally from Brazil. It is soft and moist and goes well with textured vegetable protein and white rice as side dishes.

**Tamarind juice** = tamarind is a fruit native to Africa but grown in Brazil for centuries. It has a bittersweet taste.

**Tapioca** = made of manioca powder. Its origin is indigenous, and it comes from the North and Northeast regions. It is easily found throughout Brazil in its commercial version.

**Tomato vinaigrette** = different from the vinaigrette made in the UK and the US, Brazilian vinaigrette is not a liquid, but a “sauce” dish made of cubed tomatoes, spring onion, cubed onion, olive oil,

vinegar, and salt. Tomatoes are the main ingredient.

**Tutu** = a dish made of cooked beans which are mashed and sautéed and thickened with cassava flour. It is usually sautéed with fried bacon, onion, and garlic. For a vegan version, you can make tutu without bacon, or replace the bacon with vegan bacon. This dish is more common in Minas Gerais.

**Vegan Couscous from São Paulo** = cuscuz Paulista, as it is called in Brazil. It is a cooked meal made of cornmeal and many other ingredients, like tomatoes, tomato sauce, peas, eggs, and olives. For a vegan version, eggs are omitted.

**Vegan Tropeiro beans** = regional dish from Minas Gerais (specially), Goiás and São Paulo. It is made of beans, cassava flour, collard greens, and traditionally with beef and pork. For the vegan version you can leave out the meat, or you can add plant-based meat, carrots, mushrooms, and eggplants.

**Yerba-mate tea** = is a tea made of a plant whose scientific name is *Ilex paraguariensis*. It is drunk country wide, but especially appreciated in the southern region.

\***Pizza** = of course this is not a traditional Brazilian food, but it is very popular in Brazil to order pizzas Friday night or Saturday nights, or when you go out to eat. Vegan pizzas can be made with vegan cheese, mushrooms, plant-based meat, broccoli, sweet flavors, hearts of palm, zucchini, and many other options.