

Vegan Buffalo Cauliflower Bites

SERVES 4 TO 6

Deemed “better than wings” by our tasters, these crunchy, tangy, spicy, and just plain addictive cauliflower bites will be the new star of your game day table. The key was to come up with a flavorful, crunchy coating that would hold up under the Buffalo sauce. A mixture of cornstarch and cornmeal gave us the ultracrisp exterior we wanted. But because cauliflower is not naturally moist (like chicken), the mixture didn’t adhere; we dunked the florets in canned coconut milk first, which had the right viscosity. We got decent results when we baked our bites, but we absolutely flipped over the crackly crust and tender interior we achieved through frying. We served our bites with an herby ranch dressing, a cooling foil to the kick of the bites.

BUFFALO SAUCE

- ¼ cup coconut oil**
- ½ cup hot sauce**
- 1 tablespoon packed organic dark brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar**

CAULIFLOWER

- 1-2 quarts peanut or vegetable oil**
- ¾ cup cornstarch**
- ¼ cup cornmeal**
- Salt and pepper**
- ¾ cup canned coconut milk**
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce**
- 1 pound cauliflower florets, cut into 1½-inch pieces**
- 1 ranch dressing (see related content)**

1. FOR THE BUFFALO SAUCE: Melt coconut oil in small saucepan over low heat. Whisk in hot sauce, brown sugar, and vinegar until combined. Remove from heat and cover to keep warm; set aside.

2. FOR THE CAULIFLOWER: Line platter with triple layer of paper towels. Add oil to large Dutch oven until it measures about 1½ inches deep and heat over medium-high heat to 400 degrees. While oil heats, combine cornstarch, cornmeal, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in



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small bowl. Whisk coconut milk and hot sauce together in large bowl. Add cauliflower; toss to coat well. Sprinkle cornstarch mixture over cauliflower; fold with rubber spatula until thoroughly coated.

3. Fry half of cauliflower, adding 1 or 2 pieces to oil at a time, until golden and crisp, gently stirring as needed to prevent pieces from sticking together, about 3 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer fried cauliflower to prepared platter.

4. Return oil to 400 degrees and repeat with remaining cauliflower. Transfer ½ cup sauce to clean large bowl, add fried cauliflower and gently toss to coat. Serve immediately with dressing and remaining sauce.