



What is cashew cheese?

It's a non-dairy, vegan substitute for cheese. Many different herbs or seasonings can be mixed into the creamed mixture. Adding more liquid turns it into a creamy sauce. If it's kept thick, it forms into a hummus-like cream cheese ingredient. Adding agar-agar powder and arrowroot powder can create a thick cheese and adding turmeric will provide a rich golden color.

Dairy Free Cashew Cream Cheese

- 1 cup raw unsalted cashews
- 1 cup hot or warm water
- 2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 cup unsweetened plant-based milk or water, as needed

Soak Cashews: Place cashews in a small bowl. Add enough warm water to cover the completely. Set aside to soak for about 1 to 2 hours. Drain; rinse; discard water.

Prepare Cashew Cream Cheese: Place cashews in food processor, pulse to coarse chop. Add nutritional yeast, lemon juice, sea salt, garlic powder, and 1/4 cup plant-based milk to the food processor. Cover; pulse; then process until about 1 minute. Scrape down bowl. Add remaining plant-based milk, process one minute; scrape down bowl; process until smooth and desired consistency. Remove to small bowl; cover; refrigerate about 1 hour or longer until serving. Yield: about 1 cup

What is agar-agar? It is a plant-based gelatin derived from seaweed. It's used as a stabilizer and thickening agent and is often used as a substitute for regular gelatin. It's gluten-free and nutritious.

Chili Peppered Cashew Cheese

1/2 cup unsalted raw cashews
2 teaspoons agar-agar powder
1 cup water, divided
2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
1 Tablespoon cornstarch or 2 teaspoons arrowroot powder
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon ground red chipotle pepper, optional
1 teaspoon sea salt
1/8 teaspoon ground turmeric, optional

Soak Cashews: cover with warm water for about 1 to 2 hours

Prepare Cashew Cream: Drain; rinse cashews; place in blender or food processor; add remaining 1/2 cup water, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, cornstarch, garlic powder, ground chipotle pepper, sea salt, and turmeric in blender or food processor; process until smooth and creamy, about 10 minutes. Scrape down about 3 times.

Prepare Agar-Agar Mixture: In a saucepan, mix agar-agar powder with 1/2 cup water; cook over low heat until agar is fully dissolved, about 7 minutes.

Add to Agar-Agar Mixture: Stir cashew cream into agar-agar mixture in saucepan; bring to a boil; forming a thicker batter, about 5 minutes. Spoon the mixture into one or two small ramekins; chill in refrigerator for at least 1 hour or until firm. Use and store in refrigerator about 5 days in airtight container. Yield: about 1 cup

Cook's Note: If you add the ground red pepper, you will have a spicy cheese. Turmeric will make the cheese a bright yellow, so add less turmeric for a mild yellow color or omit this ingredient for a lighter colored cheese. You can season this cheese with any herb or seasoning instead of the red pepper.

Add Ingredients and Become Adventurous

Here's Some Suggestions:

Spices like curry or smoked paprika

Chopped dried fruit

Citrus zest like lemon, lime, or orange

Sun-dried tomatoes or tomato paste

Berries

Bagel seasoning, dukkah spice blend, Italian herb blend or as desired