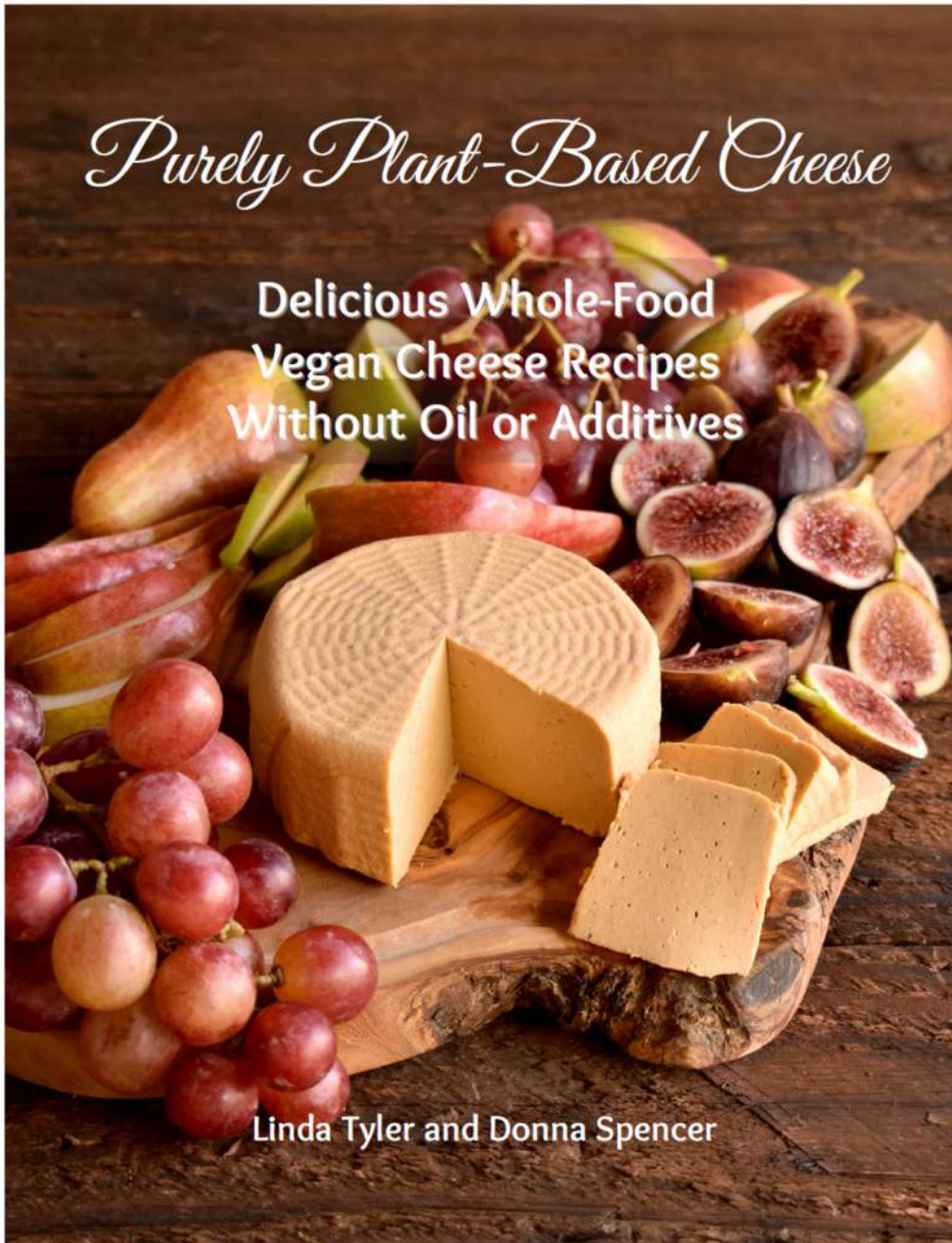


Sample Recipes from the *Purely Plant-Based Cheese Cookbook*

Purely Plant-Based Cheese

Delicious Whole-Food
Vegan Cheese Recipes
Without Oil or Additives



Linda Tyler and Donna Spencer

Fall in Love with Plant-Based Cheeses

Commercial vegan cheese has exploded in popularity over the last few years. From the ubiquitous brands seen in almost every grocery store to more upscale offerings in big-city vegan cheese shops, dairy-free cheese is catering to a growing demand for plant-based and cruelty-free options.



Cream Cheese
Recipe found on page 16

Why Cheese?

It's no wonder people want to eat cheese even after they go vegan. Cheese is part of so many comfort foods—pizza, mac 'n' cheese, grilled cheese, lasagna, quesadillas, and cheeseburgers, to name a few. For many of us, memories of these comfort foods go back to childhood, and the effects remain strong in adulthood.

Cheese is also convenient: it's ready-made and easy to add to dishes or melt on tortillas or bread for a quick meal. For an easy appetizer, hosts like to serve wine and cheese. When people's schedules are busy, they often turn to cheese.

Unfortunately, it's easy to eat too much cheese, and the fat and salt make it particularly addictive and unhealthy. One ounce of cheese (a 1-inch cube or a shot-glass full of shredded cheese) contains 110–120 calories and about 9 grams of fat, 6 of which are saturated. Note, a McDonald's hamburger also contains 9 grams of fat. Cheese provides about 7 grams of protein per ounce, but at a high cost of fat. In comparison, a half-cup of black beans also has 7 grams of protein with less than a half-gram of fat.

Our Goal

Our goal with this cookbook is to create plant-based cheeses without oils, using only the healthiest of plant-based thickeners and gelling agents. This contrasts with commercial cheeses, almost all of which contain a mix of whole foods and processed foods. We tried many different ingredients and combinations and ended up with yummy cheeses that are also wholesome, nutritious, and clean. Our focus is on simplicity and purity.

Our Cheeses

Of all the plant-based cheeses you can create using healthy ingredients, we chose to exclude those that take more than 48 hours to mature. While it's entirely possible to make plant-based versions of blue cheese, gorgonzola, brie, and camembert using special cultures, we figured most people aren't keen on experimenting with mold cultivation in their kitchens.

We divided our cheeses into "Easy" and "More Advanced" types. The easy cheeses

require no special thickeners or cultures. The ingredients are available in most grocery stores. These cheeses include Parmesan, feta, mascarpone, cottage cheese, ricotta, and cream cheese.

The “More Advanced” cheeses require the use of thickeners and, in some cases, cultures. Thickeners include tapioca starch, chia seeds, psyllium husks, and agar powder. Of these thickeners, agar powder is the trickiest to master, which is why we wrote several pages about it following this introduction (pages 4–6). The cultures include only plant-based plain yogurt and probiotic capsules, both of which are relatively easy to find and very easy to use in these recipes. Our “More Advanced” cheeses include nacho cheese sauce, sharp cheddar sauce, goat cheese, mild cheddar, smoked gouda, provolone, pepper jack, and fresh mozzarella balls.

A critical “ingredient” in several of our recipes is time. For example, we were both amazed at the difference 48 hours made in the tofu-based feta cheese and the cashew-based mild cheddar cheese, with vast improvements in both taste and texture. Sometimes, time is essential for the cultures to work and fully penetrate the other ingredients; other times, it helps the cheese set properly and achieve uniform firmness.

How Good are these Cheeses?

The flavors and textures of our cheeses are often remarkably similar to their dairy equivalents, meaning you can reunite with some of your favorite pre-vegan foods. Our feta cheese and the Greek salad you can make with it took Linda back to the days when she ordered Greek salad at The Athenian Diner in Princeton in her graduate school days. Our creamy yet crumbly goat cheese is perfect for creating crusted goat cheese croutons—crispy on the outside, soft and warm on the inside—without any oil. These croutons reminded Donna of the goat cheese croutons she ate in French bistros, where they elevate salads and are often paired with mixed greens, beets, or walnuts.

Our healthy plant-based cheeses do not melt quite like dairy cheese, mainly because of the lower fat content. We have included tapioca starch in the mild cheddar and mozzarella cheeses to achieve some stretchy effects when they are heated, but we can’t promise the exact same gooeyness as dairy cheese.

The Sky’s the Limit

We hope our recipes inspire you to try your own favorite dishes featuring these cheeses. Use your imagination and memories to come up with more ways to use these versatile cheeses in foods that you, your family, and your friends will enjoy.



Sharp Cheddar Sauce
Recipe found on page 21

Cream Cheese

Makes 20 servings or 2½ cups (about 600g)

Soak the cashews. Soak the cashews in cold water for at least 2 hours, or, for a faster soak, pour boiling water over them, cover, and let them soak for 20 minutes. Then drain them.

1 cup (140g) raw cashews

Blend everything and begin to ferment. Drain and rinse the cashews; drain the tofu. Place the following ingredients in a large blender and blend on high for 1–2 minutes, until silky smooth. You may need to add a little more water and/or stop and wipe down the sides once or twice.

The soaked and drained cashews

8 ounces (226g) extra firm tofu, drained

⅓ cup (79mL) unsweetened plant-based yogurt

3 tablespoons water (or more, if needed, 1 tablespoon at a time)



Transfer the mixture to a glass jar or container that gives the cheese an inch or two (but not more) for breathing and expansion. (A pickle jar or other jar that holds 25–30 ounces works well.) Put the top on loosely. Let the cream cheese ferment by leaving it at room temperature for about 24 hours.

Finish on Day 2. After 24 hours you should see little bubbles through the glass. That's good. In a small bowl, combine ¼ – ⅓ cup of the cheese with the miso and fork-whisk them until smooth.

2–3 teaspoons yellow or white miso paste

Then add this mixture to the rest of the cheese and fork-whisk well. Move the jar or container to the refrigerator. The cheese will continue to develop tanginess and will set up.

After a total of 48 hours, the cheese is ready to serve or use in a recipe. The cream cheese lasts about 3 weeks in the refrigerator and can be frozen.

(Continued on next page)



To make your own plant-based yogurt, see graciousvegan.com for Soymilk Yogurt. If you prefer to purchase, we recommend Kite Hill, Forager, So Delicious, and Culina unsweetened yogurts.

Cream Cheese (cont.)

RECIPES

- ✦ Twice-Baked Potatoes (page 46)
- ✦ Chocolate Cream Cheese Cupcakes (page 56)
- ✦ Creamy Peach Nice Cream (page 58)

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Add flavors to your cream cheese and spread it on bagels, toast, or crackers. Here are some ideas:

- Green onions, chopped or sliced
- Fresh dill weed, finely chopped
- Chives, finely chopped
- Sun dried tomatoes and chopped basil
- Chopped walnuts and maple syrup
- Canned pumpkin, pumpkin pie spice, and maple syrup
- Chopped fresh berries, especially strawberrie



Chocolate Cream Cheese Cupcakes
Recipe found on page 56

Bagel-shop-style vegetable cream cheese: finely chopped green onions, carrots, celery, red bell pepper, and/or fresh parsley plus a little garlic powder, onion powder, with optional dill weed.



Twice-Baked Potatoes
Recipe found on page 46

Twice-Baked Potatoes

Makes as many potatoes as you wish.

Bake the potatoes using one of the methods described on next page.

Russet potatoes (as many as you want to make)

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Choose a ceramic baking dish, or line a sheet pan with parchment paper or a silicone mat.

Allow the baked potatoes to cool until they can be handled. Lay them on their side and slice off the top of each potato. Scoop out the insides of the tops and put the insides in a mixing bowl, discarding the skins of the tops. Scoop out the insides of all the potatoes, leaving just a bit on the inside of the skins for structure. Put the insides in the same bowl. The best tool for hollowing out the potatoes is a cookie scoop or small ice cream scoop.

Make the filling with a ratio of 3:1:1. Measure the total potato innards you've scooped out. Then figure out what a third of that amount is (e.g., 3 cups of potato means a third is 1 cup). Add that much Mild Cheddar and that much Cream Cheese. Stir the cheeses and the scooped-out potato together, leaving everything chunky or making it smoother if you wish. Season with salt (or salt substitute) and pepper as desired.

Mild Cheddar Cheese, shredded (page 26)
Cream Cheese (page 16)

Fill the potato shells with the mixture, mounding the mixture on top as needed. A cookie scoop is useful for this step. Place the potatoes in the baking dish or on the sheet pan.

Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the filling is sizzling and the tops are crispy. The potatoes are ready to serve. They will last in the refrigerator for about a week. They cannot be frozen.

See **How to bake a potato** on the next page.



Our Sharp Cheddar Sauce (page 21), Nacho Cheese Sauce (page 20), Mild Provolone (page 30), and Pepper Jack (page 32) also work well in this recipe.



Twice-Baked Potatoes (cont.)

How to bake a potato

Choose from these methods. Baking times depend upon the size of your potato and the number of potatoes you are baking.

Classic Oven Baking

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Wash the potato thoroughly and dry it with a towel.
3. Poke it a few times with a fork to allow steam to escape during baking.
4. Place it directly on the oven rack or on a baking sheet.
5. Bake for about 45–60 minutes, depending on size, until the skin is crisp and the inside is tender when pierced with a fork.

Microwave Method (for faster cooking)

1. Wash and dry the potato.
2. Poke it several times with a fork.
3. Place it on a microwave-safe plate.
4. Microwave on high for 4 minutes, then turn it over and microwave for another 2–5 minutes until soft.

Grilled Potato

1. Preheat the grill to medium-high heat.
2. Wash and dry the potato, then poke it with a fork.
3. Wrap it in foil and place it on the grill.
4. Cook for about 45–60 minutes, turning occasionally, until tender.

Air Fryer Method (for crispy skin)

1. Preheat the air fryer to 400°F (200°C).
2. Wash and dry the potato, then poke it with a fork.
3. Place it in the air fryer basket and cook for about 40–45 minutes, turning the potatoes over halfway through.

Combo Microwave Method with Oven Baking Finish for Crispy Skin

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Wash and dry the potato, then poke it several times with a fork.
3. Place it on a microwave-safe plate.
4. Microwave on high for 4 minutes, then turn it over and microwave for another 2–5 minutes until soft.
5. Place the potato directly on the oven rack or on a baking sheet.
6. Bake for about 15–20 minutes, depending on size, until the skin is crisp and the inside is tender when pierced with a fork.

Choose the method that best suits your equipment and time available.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Toppings could include:

- Avocado, diced or mashed, for extra creaminess
- Green onions sprinkled over the finished potatoes for a vibrant touch
- Crispy chickpeas sprinkled on top for a crunchy and protein-rich topping

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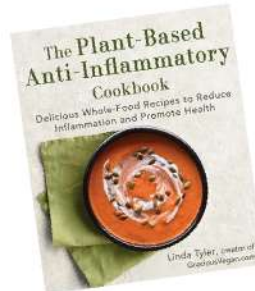
Linda Tyler

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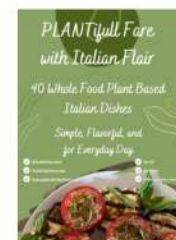
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