



Nourishing compassion for our bodies, the earth and all beings.

Cashews--the Key to Creaminess

--An offering of Eve Heidtmann

Just about everyone is familiar with cashews, those irresistible roasted and salted treats that are always the first to be picked out of a bowl of mixed nuts. But did you know that cashews in their raw form are also a remarkably versatile ingredient, the secret to adding substance and creaminess to any number of sauces, spreads, and soups?

To get acquainted with the possibilities, the place to begin is with cashew cream. This is easy to make: just put a handful of cashews in a blender, add water to cover, and spin – voila! Cream! If you prefer a thicker or thinner cream, simply add more cashews or more water. In this plain and simple form, your cream is ready to be poured into your coffee or any soup. If you are going for soup, you may want to add flavor by blending the cashews with vegetable broth instead of water.

Looking beyond soup, it's easy to turn your cream into sour cream with the addition of a little vinegar and lemon juice or, going in the other direction, make it into a dessert topping with the addition of a sweetener and touch of vanilla. For a richer, thicker whipping-type cream, combine the cashews with coconut milk instead of water and add some dates --- yum!

Going even thicker, cashews become the basis for plant-based cheeses from ricottas to hard cheeses. There are several cashew cheese recipes on our Joy of Mindful Cooking website. I'll list a few below.

But creams and cheeses are just the beginning. Cashews have also been used in salad dressings, mayonnaise, lasagna, pasta sauce, curries, mac and cheese, and dips. Here are some suggestions in the words of the creative cooks who made them:

Linda H. says, I often use cashews in soup — toward the end of cooking, I blend cashews with some of the soup broth and veggies. Dr. Fuhrman's Golden Austrian Cauliflower Soup is one of my favorites. Also, I make salad dressing with cashews instead of oil, and use cashew milk (just cashews and water blended in Vitamix) whenever recipes call for coconut milk.

Lucy created a pasta sauce on the inspiration of the moment: ... a mixture of soaked cashews, garlic, tofu, dill, lemon juice and rice vinegar, with nutritional yeast and salt to taste. That's the most detail I can muster - I just threw it all in the blender and tasted until it tasted good.

Ashwani uses cashew cream in Indian curries, As far as cashews, I use them frequently in Indian curries to make a creamy base, just blend handful of raw cashews with 1 cup of water, to make a cream. I've made a "mexican" sauce with cashews, using cashews and corn, and water, and also the most amazing was the butternut squash "mac and cheese"
<http://www.thedoctorstv.com/articles/3743-top-secret-mac-n-cheese-for-parents-eyes-only>.. I have tried a plant-based cheese recipe made with cashews, miso and herbs that was just heavenly with crackers. This is posted to my IG account [at https://www.instagram.com/p/BOvMc-Ng5-S/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BOvMc-Ng5-S/)

Linda W. suggests a recipe from her Cook For Good website for a light cashew cream made with eggplant: <http://cookforgood.com/recipe/how-to-make-light-cashew-cream-with-eggplant.html>

Wherever you might like creaminess, consider doing it with cashews: think cheesecake, pudding, ice cream, cashew milk, cheesy sauce, cashew butter...

Below is a sampling of “friend-tested” recipes from our Joy of Mindful Cooking website.

CREAMS

Cashew Cream <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-cream>

Sour Cream <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-sour-cream>

DESSERT SAUCES

Vanilla Creme Sauce <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/vanilla-creme-sauce>

Cashew Whipped Creme or Frosting <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-whipped-creme-or-frosting>

SOFT CHEESES – SAUCES – DIPS

Fromage de Brie <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/fromage-de-brie>

Cashew Ricotta Cheeze <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-ricotta-cheeze>

Raw Cashew Cheese <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/raw-cashew-cheese>

Nacho Cheese <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/nacho-cheese>

Roasted Red Pepper Dip or Spread <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/roasted-red-pepper-cashew-dip-or-spread>

Amazing Cheese Sauce or Dip <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/amazing-cheese-sauce-queso-macaroni-cheese-etc>

CHEESY SAUCE MIX

Homemade Cheesy Sauce Mix <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/homemade-cheesy-sauce-mix>

PARMESAN STYLE CHEESE

Cashew Parm <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-parm>

HARD CHEESE

Sharp Cheddar Nut Cheese <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/sharp-cheddar-nut-cheese>

Mozzarella Bean Cheese — <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/mozzarella-bean-cheese>

MAYONNAISE

Cashew Goo <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-goo-kind-mayonnaise>

A FEW RECIPES USING CASHEWS

- Cream of Celery Root Soup <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cream-celery-root-soup>
- Cream of Broccoli Deluxe <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cream-broccoli-deluxe>
- Cashew Curry <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/cashew-curry>
- Noodleless Zucchini Lasagna <http://mindfulcooking.org/recipes/noodleless-zucchini-lasagna>

This is just the beginning! You will find more on our website, <http://mindfulcooking.org/>, and all over the Internet.

Enjoy!