



Artisan **VEGAN CHEESE**

F R O M E V E R Y D A Y T O G O U R M E T



M I Y O K O S C H I N N E R

Artisan
**VEGAN
CHEESE**

FROM EVERYDAY TO GOURMET

Miyoko Schinner

Book Publishing Company

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Introduction

If you like instant gratification, you've picked up the wrong book. My intention in saying that isn't to scare you away, but to inform you that making the cheeses in this book will require your patience and love—not as much patience as may be required for making a dairy cheese, which often takes months, but enough that you'll usually have to wait a few days or more to taste your creations. Rest assured, however, that the amount of work involved in making each cheese is but a few minutes . . . and then you just have to wait. Your patience will be rewarded. After all, as they say, wine, cheese—and even some of us—improve with age.

Cultured Flavor

It was my youngest daughter who remarked, when eating one of my earlier attempts at vegan cheese, that it was more *tangy* than *sharp*. That got me thinking about the difference between vegan cheeses and dairy cheese. What transforms simple milk into cheese is a culturing process that begins with various bacteria and enzymes, which coagulate the proteins in the milk, allowing the solids to separate from the whey. The cheese is then aged for a few days to many months, and during that time it develops its distinctive character and flavor. Depending on the type of enzymes and bacteria used, as well as certain molds for bloomy-rind and blue-veined cheeses, the final product takes on different characteristics.

With vegan cheeses, the process is a little different. The proteins in soy milk and nut milks react differently to culturing agents and don't tend to coagulate in such a way that curds separate out, and therefore must be processed and aged using somewhat different methods. Therefore, most vegan cheeses on the market today aren't cultured or aged; instead, they're made to taste like cheese through the addition of flavorings, often utilizing an acidic ingredient, such as lemon juice, to imitate a sharp flavor. As my daughter's remark indicated, this often results in more of a tanginess than a sharpness.

What makes the cheeses in this book different is that they gain their cheeselike qualities from culturing and varying degrees of aging, rather than the addition of acidic ingredients. This helps create not only sharpness but also more flavor, depth, and umami—that extremely satisfying savory taste designated as the fifth basic flavor. Achieving this complexity of flavor is something you simply cannot rush—you must let the process unfold naturally. Of course, you will have to monitor it, as ambient temperature, humidity, and other conditions can affect how quickly cheeses culture, age, or spoil. But the reward for your patience and love are fabulous cheeses that can be used just like their dairy counterparts in myriad culinary applications. With these cheeses, you will be able to create vegan versions of some of your favorite recipes that incorporate cheese—something you may have thought impossible.

Once you make these cheeses, you can store them in your refrigerator (and in most cases in your freezer) so you'll have them on hand whenever you want to cook with them. If you're a longtime vegan and have forgotten how to cook with cheese, chapters 7 through 9 offer delectable appetizers, entrées, and desserts made with the recipes for cheeses and other dairy alternatives in the earlier chapters of this book.

Even if you still balk at making anything that takes more than a few minutes, you're still in luck. Chapter 4 is devoted to recipes for almost-instant cheeses that are pretty tasty as well.

A Snapshot of the Cheese-Making Process

Here's a glimpse of what you'll find in “Miyoko's Cheese Shop” and what you'll need to set up a cheese shop of your own. This section will give you an idea of what to expect and what tools and ingredients you'll need in order for your cheese-making endeavors to be successful.

First of all, you'll need a culturing agent. For most of the cheeses in this book, that will be some form of probiotic—a substance that contains friendly bacteria that help turn the base ingredient into cheese, or at least contribute to the flavor. While powdered probiotics can accomplish this, these products tend to be very expensive, and often they aren't vegan. Their strength also differs from brand to brand, so I've chosen not to use them in this book, although you can certainly experiment with them if you wish. Instead, these cheeses are primarily cultured with rejuvelac or nondairy yogurt.

Rejuvelac, a fermented beverage made from whole grains, contains a variety of friendly bacteria, including some that produce lactic acid, which contributes to sharpness. It can easily be made at home using widely available whole grains, such as brown rice or rye, spelt, or wheat berries. Although you can probably buy rejuvelac at your local natural food store, I recommend that you make it as the first step on your journey into vegan cheeses. Also note that store-bought rejuvelac is generally made with sprouted wheat berries, so if you are intolerant to wheat, you'll want to make your own using another whole grain. The recipe for making your own rejuvelac (page 6) is simple, but it

does take several days. Whether homemade or store-bought, rejuvelac works beautifully as a culturing agent.

Nondairy yogurt, which is also used as a culture for many of the cheeses in this book, is widely available commercially. However, if you save a little store-bought yogurt, you can use that to make your own yogurt (page 56).

The base ingredients of the cheeses range from nuts to soy milk to soy yogurt. Many of the cheeses utilize methods developed by raw foodists and involve culturing puréed cashews or other nuts, although with my own spin to them, which in some cases result in a product that isn't raw. While nuts make great cheeses, those cheeses don't melt because the base is a solid substance that cannot get any softer. In order to make cheeses that melt, I took a cue from dairy cheeses and experimented with using nondairy yogurt as the base, because it's more liquid, and then adding oil. The majority of the cheeses in this book, however, do not contain oil.

Traditionally, hard cheeses are made by pressing as much whey out of the curds as possible, leaving behind largely solidified protein and fat. Although some recipes for raw nut-based cheeses call for putting the cheese in a colander and pressing it by weighting the top with river rocks, bricks, or other heavy objects, I find it difficult to get consistent results with this method. If you want to make cheeses that are hard or just firmer, a cheese press is invaluable—and you'll also need much more time and patience.

Furthermore, because many of the cheeses in this book don't involve separating curds from liquid ingredients analogous to whey, I opted for an easier method of firming up the hard cheeses (semifirm, really): adding natural thickening agents such as agar, carrageenan, tapioca flour, and xanthan gum. You may be able to find these at your grocery store, but I've also provided information on online suppliers (see page 137). Carrageenan yields a better texture than agar, but agar can be used in almost every recipe in this book except the meltable cheeses in chapter 3. Note that when substituting agar powder for carrageenan powder, you'll need to double the amount.

Adding thickening agents has its drawbacks, however. If too much is used, the texture of the cheese becomes somewhat gelatinous. Consequently, the “hard” cheeses in this book are somewhat softer than dairy cheeses. In chapter 2, you'll find air-dried cheeses, which develop a harder texture as they dry. This can take from several days to several weeks, depending on the variety; for example, Air-Dried Parmesan (page 34), which is quite hard, dries for two to three weeks.

You probably already have most of the equipment you'll need, and if not, it can be purchased at a kitchen supply store. You'll need a blender, preferably a high-speed model. A regular blender will also work; just be sure that when making nut-based cheeses you soak the nuts for the longer amount of time indicated in the recipe. I find that food processors generally don't purée nuts as well as blenders do, although this may depend on the brand and model. You will also need molds for shaping many of the cheeses (see sidebar, page 4). For air-dried cheeses, you'll need a wire rack like those used for cooling baked goods. Other helpful tools are cheesecloth, a colander, a food processor, parch-

Forming the Cheese

In many cases, the cheeses in this book are shaped in a mold. There are no strict rules about what sort of mold to use, other than using a glass or nonreactive metal container. You don't need to go out and buy any special molds; you can probably make use of things you already have in your kitchen. Small loaf pans, ramekins, bowls, storage containers, and cake pans are all great options.

When deciding what type of mold to use, consider the type of cheese you're making and what size you want the finished cheese to be. For the Sharp Cheddar (page 14), you might opt to use just one loaf pan to make a large block of cheese, while for Cashew Chèvre (page 8), you might choose to use several ramekins. Or you can toss tradition to the wind and make small, round Cheddar cheeses and square blocks of chèvre!

While most of the cheeses will come right out of the mold once firm, you may want to line the mold with cheesecloth or plastic wrap for easier removal.

ment paper, wooden spoons, whisks, a heavy medium-sized saucepan, and a sieve. For making yogurt, farmer's cheese, and deep-fried foods, a kitchen thermometer is very handy. For many of the desserts in chapter 9, you'll need a springform pan and an electric mixer. That's about it for equipment!

The Proof Is in the Cheese

The idea behind most of my cheese recipes is that you can use the cheeses to replace their dairy counterparts in every way, including in almost any recipe that calls for cheese. You can store them as long in your refrigerator—and some of them just keep getting better with time. So read on and make several of the cheeses in chapters 1 through 4. Although it may seem daunting at first, they're really quite easy to make. Once you have them on hand in your fridge, you can pull out some old cookbooks, dust them off, and replicate old favorite recipes that called for cheese. Maybe you'll be craving a grilled cheese sandwich, or perhaps you'll want to put together an amazing cheese plate for a party. Either way, all you'll need to do is go to your refrigerator.



*Clockwise from top left: Air-dried Gouda, page 28, Hard Gruyère, page 13,
Brie with whole peppercorns, page 12, Boursin, page 10,
Sun-Dried Tomato and Garlic Cream Cheese page 24, and Meltable Muenster, page 41*

ARTISAN VEGAN CHEESE

Gourmet restaurateur and vegan food expert **MIYOKO SCHINNER** shares her secrets for making homemade nondairy cheeses that retain all the complexity and sharpness of their dairy counterparts while incorporating nutritious nuts and plant-based milks. Miyoko shows how to tease artisan flavors out of unique combinations of ingredients, such as rejuvelac and nondairy yogurt, with minimal effort. The process of culturing and aging the ingredients produces delectable vegan cheeses with a range of consistencies from soft and creamy to firm.



For readers who want to whip up something quick, Miyoko provides recipes for almost-instant ricotta and sliceable cheeses, in addition to a variety of tangy dairy substitutes, such as vegan sour cream, crème fraîche, and yogurt.

For suggestions on how to incorporate vegan artisan cheeses into favorite recipes, Miyoko offers up delectable appetizers, entrées, and desserts, from caprese salad and classic mac and cheese to eggplant parmesan and her own San Francisco cheesecake.

A revolutionary concept for vegan cheeses with extraordinary flavor!



“Miyoko works miracles in the kitchen. Her vegan cheeses are so delicious and so much like dairy cheese, it’s hard to believe no cows are harmed in their production. The best thing since sliced bread—or on it.”

PATTI BREITMAN, CO-AUTHOR, *HOW TO EAT LIKE A VEGETARIAN, EVEN IF YOU NEVER WANT TO BE ONE*

“Miyoko is an accomplished and creative chef. She fooled me when she made some nondairy cheeses for a party. They looked like the gourmet cheeses often served at fancy occasions and the flavor and texture were outstanding.”

ANN WHEAT, OWNER, MILLENNIUM RESTAURANT



“Miyoko has found the holy grail of the culinary world. So many people have wanted to make cheeses with enough flavor and delicacy to really seduce our taste buds, while staying free of animal fat and cholesterol. *Artisan Vegan Cheese* is one of the most beautiful and practical books you’ll ever own.”

NEAL D. BARNARD, MD, PRESIDENT, PHYSICIANS COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSIBLE MEDICINE, ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

“Miyoko Schinner makes makes the finest vegan cheeses I’ve ever had. They’re truly amazing. I can’t wait to try every recipe.”

BETSY CARSON, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, DELICIOUS TV



“Miyoko Schinner makes eating nutritious food fun and delicious, and her cooking offers a simple solution to our nation’s epidemics of obesity and disease.”

JOHN McDUGALL, MD, FOUNDER, THE McDUGALL PROGRAM

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