

The best vegan/plant-based cheese: taste test



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Many people cite the fact that they can't bear giving up cheese as the main reason that stops them from adopting a plant-based diet. Vegan/plant-based cheese had a bit of a bad reputation until relatively recently. Deemed tasteless and plastic-like, people turned their nose up at dairy-free cheese.

In just a few years, huge progress has been made in the cheese alternative sector, with artisanal vegan cheese companies launching on the market and more and more dairy cheese brands debuting plant-based versions of their products.

Now one can find any kind of plant-based cheese they like, with a similar taste and mouthfeel to its dairy counterpart.

nashi, Kinada Co, Honestly Tasty, vegusto, Follow Your Heart, Palace Culture, New Roots and Nurishh. Whilst trickier to find in Britain, there are also some US brands of note, such as [Miyoko's Creamery](#), and Kite Hill.

Dairy brands that have released vegan versions of their cheeses include Boursin, Babybel, Philadelphia and Primula.

What is vegan/plant-based cheese?

Vegan/plant-based cheese is cheese, but made without animal ingredients, so instead of dairy, plant-based milk is used in its place. As casein is dairy, vegan cheese makers replace it with starches, hydrocolloids and oils, such as olive oil and coconut oil, so that the cheese can melt, stretch – like mozzarella – and solidify. Dutch plant-based ingredient company Fooditive has created a [vegan casein](#) alternative made from peas.

Because plant-based cheese doesn't contain any dairy, it's suitable for those suffering from a lactose intolerance, however, those suffering from nut allergies should opt for a soy-based cheese, and those allergic to soy should choose a nut or coconut version.

What is vegan cheese made of?

Different types of ingredients go into vegan cheese, depending on the type of cheese it is emulating – creamy, soft, semi-hard, hard, grated.

Base ingredients include nuts, most commonly cashews, but also other types, such as almonds, water, plant-based milk – either nut, coconut or soy – coconut oil, rice bran oil, sprouted brown rice, salt, flavouring such as onion powder, garlic, porcini mushrooms or truffle oil, and cultures.

According to the cheese type, more ingredients might be added, such as tapioca flour, agar agar and carrageenan. Many plant-based cheeses use very few ingredients in their formulation. For example, some of Mouse's Favourite's cheeses only contain cashews, water, salt and cultures.

How is vegan cheese made?

Plant-based cheese is not made dissimilarly from dairy. The base of vegan cheese ingredients starts with the nuts, coconut oil, soy and water to which bacterial cultures, emulsifiers, oils, thickeners such as agar agar and tapioca flour, and flavourings are added. Some plant-based cheeses are then aged, whilst others, such as a vegan mozzarella and plant-based cream cheese, are packaged and sold fresh.

Is vegan cheese healthy?

are saturated fats, whilst Mouse's Favourite's Camembert style contains 34.7 g of fat, but only 7.5 g are saturated.

Vegan cheese calories vary by product, some are the same as dairy, some lower, some higher. In the case of the aforementioned camembert cheeses, the dairy variety contains 269 kcal per 100 g, whilst the vegan one 432 kcal. It's worth noting however, that most of the calories from nut-based vegan cheese come from nuts, which are nutritious, so in moderation, they can have health benefits.

Does vegan cheese melt?

Some vegan cheeses melt very well and are ideal in sauces, sandwiches and on pizzas, whilst others don't and should be eaten raw. Many types of plant-based cheddar cheese, mozzarella, cream cheese, cheese slices and shredded cheese melt, but if in doubt, read the package as it's always stated if the cheese is suitable for melting.

Taste test: the best vegan/plant-based cheese

Best vegan/plant-based cream cheese: Nush Almond M*lk Natural Cheese and Sheese Garlic and Herb Cream Cheese

There are plenty of delicious plant-based cream cheeses on the market. Few in fact are disappointing.

Available from [Whole Foods Market](#), Nush Almond M*lk Natural Cheese is delicate and works well topped with nuts and vegetables and as its low in salt, can work well in cheesecake too.

[Sheese Garlic and Herb Cream Cheese](#) is full of flavour and is ideal on toast and in jacket potatoes. Both can also be used in sauces, pasta and rice.

Runner up: Made with BioSuRice (sprouted brown rice) [MozzaRisella Mascarice](#) is slightly sweet and is perfect to be used just like Italian mascarpone, lending itself particularly well to tiramisu and cheesecake. It also works well in place of clotted cream on scones with jam.



Plant-based Boursin, Nush, Sheese Garlic and Herb and MozzaRisella Mascarice

Best vegan/plant-based camembert: Mouse's Favourite Camblue

Cashew-based **Mouse's Favourite Camblue** is a camembert with a hint of blue cheese in the centre. It's hard to distinguish from a traditional camembert as its rind, flavour and texture are very similar to the authentic dairy version. This cheese got top marks all round. Delicious and satisfying, it will win over those who have so far not been fans of vegan cheese.

Runner up: **Nurishh Plant-Based Alternative to Camembert** has an excellent rind and flavour, but has quite a pungent aftertaste that divided opinions, with some testers loving it and some finding it a little too strong. **La Fauxmagerie Camemvert** also scored well for its rind and texture, but its flavour, whilst very good, was a little on the delicate side.



Nurishh Camembert



Mouse's Favourite Camblue

Best vegan/plant-based cheddar: Violife Epic Mature Cheddar Flavour

If you like a strong-bodied cheddar cheese with a good crumble, you'll love Violife Epic Mature Cheddar Flavour. This cheddar style cheese melts well and is ideal in sandwiches, on toast, in

Best vegan/plant-based parmesan: Notorious Nooch Co Cheesy Immature and I AM NUT OK Oh, Grate! Grated Italian Cheese Alternative

You've probably heard the word 'nooch' and wondered what it is. It's simply short for nutritional yeast, a staple in every vegan's cupboard. Packed with B vitamins, **Notorious Nooch Co. Cheesy Immature** is made with yeast flakes and flavouring and packs a very parmesan-like flavour, making it ideal on pizza, pasta and salads. **I AM NUT OK Oh, Grate! Grated Italian Cheese Alternative** is also excellent, and is flavoured with garlic and truffle oil, which give it a punchy umami, aromatic flavour. Made with cashew nuts, its flavour and consistency are very similar to parmesan cheese.



Notorious Nooch Co. Cheesy Immature



I AM NUT OK Oh, Grate! Grated Italian Cheese Alternative

Best vegan/plant-based mozzarella: MozzaRisella Classica and Smoked and I AM NUT OK Buffalo Notzarella

MozzaRisella is well known in the dairy free cheese world for making a truly delicious plant-based mozzarella, which can be enjoyed raw or melted on pizza, pasta, in sandwiches and a variety of other dishes. Both the **Classica** and **Smoked** are tasty, 'milky', stringy and very satisfying. If you love buffalo mozzarella, **I AM NUT OK Buffalo Notzarella** is mouthwatering, melts beautifully and, like MozzaRisella, can be eaten raw or cooked. Both products won over the testers, no other mozzarella brand scored as highly.



MozzaRisella Mozzarella Classica



I AM NUT OK Buffalo Notzarella

Best vegan/plant-based halloumi: Veto VegiSteak Halloumi Style Slices

Milder than dairy halloumi, Veto VegiSteak has a good bite and flavour and can be enjoyed grilled or eaten raw straight from the packet. Made with extra firm tofu, it's as light as it is

Herb G.O.A.T.

I AM NUT OK Italian Herb G.O.A.T. is tangy, tasty, and delicious. Perfect for a cheese board, but also in pasta, pizza or in a baked dish. It has a creamy texture and spreads well on crackers and toast, and has an excellent goat cheese-like mouthfeel.

Best vegan/plant-based flavoured cheese: I AM NUT OK Black Truffle NeroMinded

I AM NUT OK takes first prize again with its Black Truffle NeroMinded. Activated charcoal gives this cheese its deep black colour, whilst garlic and truffle oil add a depth of flavour. One for those who like a strong, pungent cheese with lots of character and umami notes.



I AM NUT OK Black Truffle NeroMinded



La Faumagerie Brixton Blue

Best vegan/plant-based dairy brand alternative: Boursin Plant-Based Garlic & Herbs Cheese and Babybel Plant-based Vegan Snacks

Boursin have done an excellent job with the plant-based alternative of their classic spreadable cheese. Full of garlic and herbs, it tastes just like the dairy version. Testers deemed the **vegan Babybel** better than the milk-based original, citing its delicate flavour, good texture and excellent mouthfeel.

Best vegan/plant-based Wensleydale: Sheese Wensleydale Style with Cranberries

Wensleydale with cranberries is the quintessential Christmas cheese, but **Sheese**'s is so good, it should be enjoyed all year round. Crumbly, tangy and sweet, this is perfect to be enjoyed with biscuits and a good red wine.



Bute Island's Sheese cheese board with Wensleydale and cranberries



I AM NUT OK Italian Herb G.O.A.T.

Best vegan/plant-based feta cheese: Green Vie Greek Style Vegan Feta Cheese

Green Vie Greek Style Vegan Feta Cheese was the clear winner in this category. Tangy, crumbly and great in a Greek salad.

La Fauxmagerie Brixton Blue is a blue style cheese, very similar to stilton, with a good flavour and mouthfeel. Enjoy it with nuts, pear slices, grapes and a good bottle of red.

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