The Smart Guide to Cooking Oils: What to Use, When

Photo: Getty Images

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As a health-conscious eater who studies nutrition and loves to cook, I thought I knew what I needed to know about cooking oil.

I stared at an unlabeled bottle of vegan Bagel Zest Herbed and Spiced Cream Cheese (yes, I was at a vegan bagel shop, and yes, I was hungry and curious) and wondered what it was made of. Sunflower seed oil, maybe, and cashew butter, and nutritional yeast, I guessed, and a little salt and pepper.

Food marketing writer Angie Lynch, who at 23 years old ran a vegan food truck in Los Angeles, knows the ingredients in her bagel spread by heart. Lynch's company, Nourished Food, is now selling vegan bagels and cream cheese in Los Angeles, Orange County, and Phoenix, and she's thinking of adding Seattle and Austin. Unsurprisingly, it requires a lot of oil to make the bagels and cream cheese.

Lynch's company uses a blend of sunflower oil and coconut oil to make the bagels, and a blend of sunflower oil and cashew butter to make the cream cheese. Lynch's company also uses sunflower oil to make the vegan Parmesan cheese, which is made of cashews, nutritional yeast, and salt.

Sunflower oil is an oil extracted from sunflower seeds. It has a light taste and a high smoke point.

Cashew butter is made from roasted cashews, which are the kidney-shaped nuts that grow on the bottom of the cashew fruit. Cashew butter is a thick, creamy, and nutty-tasting spread, and it also has a lot of fat and calories.

Nutritional yeast is an unfortunately named ingredient that is actually quite good. It's a deactivated yeast that is sold in flakes or powder form. It has a cheesy, nutty, and savory taste, and it is a popular ingredient among people who follow a vegan diet.

Vegan Parmesan is a dairy-free version of Parmesan cheese. It is made from cashews, nutritional yeast, and salt.

How to Choose the Right Cooking Oil for Health and Heart

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Lynch's company uses a lot of oil to make the vegan cream cheese. Vegan food is, in fact, a lot of oil. Lots of oil. Oil is the main ingredient in most vegan cheeses, and it's also the main ingredient in most vegan meat substitutes, such as Impossible Burgers and Beyond Meat products.

Lynch's company uses a blend of sunflower oil and coconut oil to make the vegan bagels. Coconut oil is a popular ingredient in vegan baked goods, because it's a solid at room temperature, and it can be used to make a vegan version of butter. Lynch's company also uses sunflower oil to make the vegan bagels, because it's a liquid at room temperature, and it can be used to make a vegan version of vegetable oil.

Lynch's company also uses sunflower oil to make the vegan Parmesan cheese, because it's a liquid at room temperature, and it can be used to make a vegan version of olive oil. Lynch's company also uses sunflower oil to make the vegan cream cheese, because it's a liquid at room temperature, and it can be used to make a vegan version of vegetable oil.