**Nutella**  
2 cups whole raw hazelnuts  
1 cup powdered sugar  
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
up to 1/4 cup vegetable or nut oil  
1/2 tsp vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place hazelnuts in a single layer on a shallow baking pan. Toast until the skins are almost black and the meat is dark brown, about 15 minutes. Stir the nuts halfway through baking so ensure an even color.

Since the skin is bitter, you’ll want to discard them. Wrap the cooled hazelnuts in a clean kitchen towel or paper towel, and rub until most of the skins have come off. Don’t fret if you can’t get off all the skins.

Process nuts in a food processor, scraping down the sides of the bowl occasionally, until they have liquefied, about 5 minutes. At first, you will get coarsely chopped nuts, and then it will turn into a fine meal. After a little while, the nuts will form a ball around the blade, and it will seem like you only have a solid mass. Keep processing. The heat and friction will extract the natural oils, and you will get hazelnut butter!

When the nuts are liquidized, add in the sugar, cocoa and vanilla. Slowly drizzle in enough oil to make a spreadable consistency. Since the mixture is warm, it will be more liquidy now than at room temperature.

Transfer the spread to an airtight container, and store refrigerated for up to 1 month. For best results, stir the Nutella before using.

Notes:

* Do use whole raw nuts, and toast them yourself to intensify the nut flavor. Pre-toasted or pre-chopped nuts are often spoiled.
* To further intensify the nut flavor, use unrefined nut oil, which is tan in color. Refined nut oils have the color and flavor removed. Peanut oil is especially cheap in Chinese supermarkets. I bought 20 ounces for $2.38! There’s a lesson here: if you’re looking for an “gourmet” ingredient, try an ethnic market. People wouldn’t dare pay an arm and a leg for something that’s a cooking staple. American supermarkets mark up the price of tofu, rice flour (for the gluten-intolerant or the culinarily curious) or seaweed all in the name of health, but in a Chinese market, these things cost less than a loaf of bread.
* To make any standard nut butter, use this procedure but omit the powdered sugar, cocoa, vanilla and extra oil. Add 1/2 tsp salt and 2 tbsp granulated sugar. Try making your own cashew butter: you may never go back to peanut butter again!