

CASHEW-LESS VEGAN QUESO

| Prep time | Cook time | Total time |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 30 mins | 15 mins | 45 mins |

Author: Minimalist Baker

Recipe type: Appetizer, Sauce

Cuisine: Vegan, Gluten Free

Serves: 6



Ingredients

- 7-9 rounds of eggplant, sliced 1/4-inch thick (~half of a medium eggplant)
- Olive oil
- Sea salt
- 1.5-2 cups unsweetened original almond milk
- 2-3 Tbsp nutritional yeast (see instructions)
- 1/4 tsp finely minced fresh garlic (I used crushed garlic from Trader Joe's)
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp cornstarch (optional for thickening | sub another thickener if desired)
- 1/4 cup chunky medium salsa, slightly drained (OR 1/4 10-ounce can of Rotel original diced tomatoes and green chilies)
- OPTIONAL: Smoked paprika and hot sauce for added color and flavor upon serving.

Instructions

1. Slice your eggplant into thin rounds just under 1/2 inch (not quite 1/4 inch), then sprinkle both sides of the flesh with a little sea salt and arrange in a colander to help draw out some of the moisture and bitterness. Let set for 10-15 minutes, then rinse with cool water and thoroughly pat dry between two clean towels.
2. Preheat oven to high broil and place an oven rack near the top of the oven. Arrange the dried eggplant rounds on a baking sheet lightly spritzed with non-stick spray and drizzle both sides of the eggplant with a little olive oil. Sprinkle with a very small amount of salt.
3. Broil on high for 4-5 minutes on each side, watching carefully as to not let them burn. Flip at the halfway point to ensure even cooking. Once the eggplant appears tender and both sides have golden brown color, remove from the oven and wrap loosely in foil to steam.
4. After a few minutes, unwrap and peel the eggplant skin away. It should come right off. **If you pack your roasted eggplant into a 1-cup measuring cup, it will be almost 1 cup.**
5. Place eggplant in a blender with the 1.5 cups (to start) almond milk, 2 Tbsp nutritional yeast, minced garlic, cumin, chili powder and cornstarch and blend on high until smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust

seasonings as needed. I added a pinch more sea salt and a little more nutritional yeast. To thin, add more almond milk.

6. Transfer to a small saucepan and warm over medium to medium heat until slightly thickened and bubbly – about 5 minutes. The longer you go the thicker it will become.
7. NOTE: If it isn't looking as thick as you want, thicken with a slurry of cornstarch by adding an additional 1 tsp cornstarch to a small bowl with a little almond milk and 2-3 Tbsp of the cheese mixture. Whisk to combine and then stir back into the pot. This should thicken it right up.
8. Once hot and thickened, remove from heat and stir in DRAINED salsa or Rotel. Don't put the liquid in or it will make it runny. Pour into a serving dish and top with a little smoked paprika and hot sauce for flavor/color.
9. Serve with chips, crackers or veggies. Keep warm in a mini crockpot or over a tea light warmer if you have one. Microwaves well.
10. NOTE: When this dip sits out for a long time it loses its orange hue. It doesn't affect the flavor but it doesn't look as appetizing, so it's really best when fresh!
11. Refrigerate and cover leftovers. Reheats extremely well in the microwave or in a saucepan. Will keep for up to a few days, but best when fresh.

Notes

*Nutrition information is a rough estimate for 1 of 6 servings.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: ~1/4cup Calories: 55 Fat: 3.5g Saturated fat: 0g Carbohydrates: 4.7g Sugar: .7g
Sodium: 326mg Fiber: 2g Protein: 2.3g

Recipe by Minimalist Baker at <http://minimalistbaker.com/cashew-less-vegan-queso/>