



Mozzarella made from nuts



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Eating less meat doesn't have to mean sacrifice. In recent years, this resolution has resulted in lots of wonderful new additions to our culinary repertoire. For example, mozzarella made from entirely plant-based ingredients. And it's super easy to make your own.

Vegan mozzarella behaves in the same way as milk-based mozzarella. You can slice it for an insalata caprese or melt it on a pizza. The main ingredients are cashew nuts and soya yoghurt. Good-quality versions of these are now widely available and thankfully also come from sustainable production systems. Manufacturers of soya yoghurt sold here in Switzerland tend to use European soya. And cashew nuts are also imported into the country directly from farmers in Asia so that trade and prices remain transparent. Pakka is a Swiss company known for Fairtrade cashews from southern India. It monitors how the cashews are produced on-site and ensures that Fairtrade standards are observed. A thickening agent is required in order to turn cashews and soya yoghurt into mozzarella balls. A popular combination is tapioca starch and agar-agar. Tapioca starch is made from dried cassava root, while agar-agar is obtained from algae. Both of these products are widely available these days, so there's nothing to stop you from making your own.



Here's a recipe for vegan mozzarella:

Ingredients:

150 g cashew nuts
250 g plain plant-based yoghurt*
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 1/2 tsp salt
3 tbsp tapioca starch
8 g agar-agar

**Soya yoghurt, other alternatives include coconut yoghurt or even silken tofu.*

Method:

Soak the cashew nuts in water for 3 hours. Drain the water. Place the cashews, yoghurt, lemon juice and salt in a high-power mixer and blitz until the mixture is as smooth as possible. Leave to stand for 24 hours to allow the aromas to develop (this step is not essential).

Mix the tapioca starch into the nut mixture.

Bring the agar-agar and 125 ml of water to a gentle simmer, stirring constantly. Add the cashew and yoghurt cream, and simmer for approx. 5 minutes, stirring constantly. The mixture should become thicker and tougher.

Shape the mixture into balls and then place the balls in ice-cold water.* Leave to rest for approx. 30 minutes. The mozzarella is then ready.

** My experience: leave the mixture to cool and thicken slightly first – this will make it easier to shape into balls.*