

INGREDIENT WATCH: VEGAN CHEESE FORMULATIONS

Next-generation vegan cheeses are offering more than just coconut oil, and are drawing from ingredient trends in plant-based milk alternatives.



Stephanie Mattucci,
Associate Director, Global
Food Science



Mintel's perspective

What is it?

Compared to other non-dairy categories, non-dairy versions of cheese have lagged in terms of innovation and product introductions. Non-dairy cheese or vegan cheese formulations have primarily been based on coconut oil and modified starches, but cashew and almonds are starting to emerge with added nutritional benefits.

Why is it important?

The bar is set high to create a plant-based version of cheese that delivers functionality, nutrition, and of course, taste. More nutritious ingredients, such as cashews, almonds and even oats, have potential to boost the vegan cheese category.

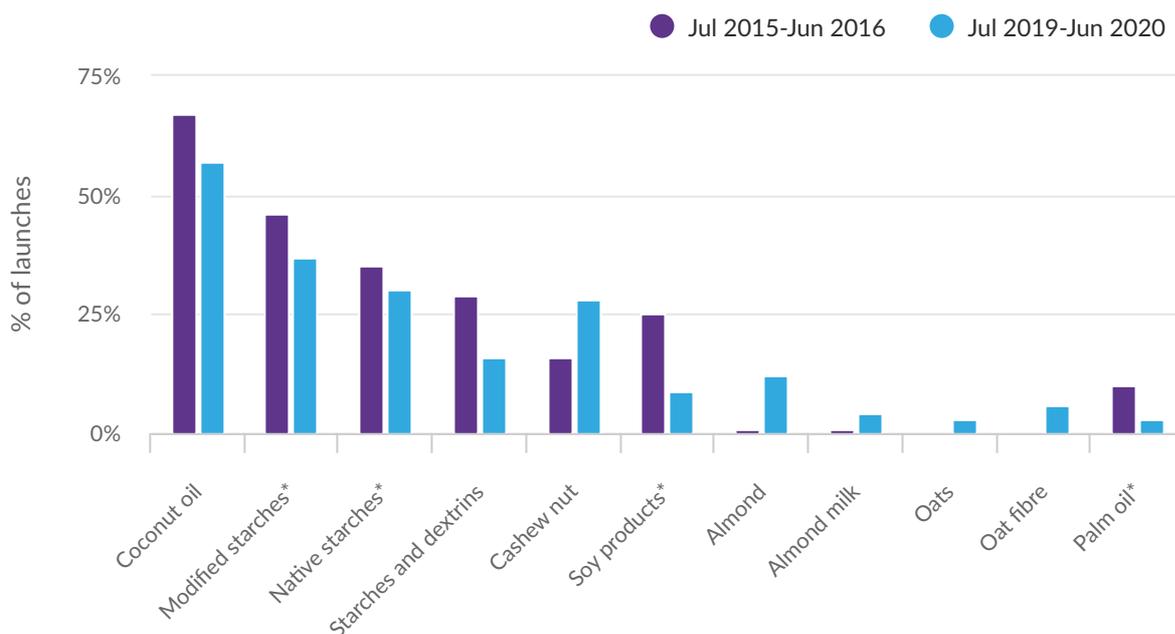
What's next?

Vegan cheese will need to improve its nutritional value, especially for protein and calcium, to compete with dairy cheese. This is critical to win over sought-after flexitarian consumers who need more reasons than just "dairy-free" to select vegan cheese.

Coconut oil and modified starches are key ingredients in vegan processed cheese

While the majority of vegan processed cheeses contain coconut oil and starches, product launches with cashew, almond, and even oats are starting to emerge.

Global: percentage of vegan processed cheese launches with select ingredients, Jul 2015-Jun 2020



* includes all children ingredients

Source: [Mintel GNPD](#)

New vegan cheese innovation builds on plant-based milk trends for nuts and oats

Cashew is the **most common nut** used in vegan processed cheeses, followed by almond. Oat ingredients are starting to emerge in vegan cheeses, too.

Cashew-based

Nuts for Cheese Red Rind Cheese is a fermented cashew product. This vegan product is described as a rich and creamy semi-firm wedge. Made with cashews, coconut oil, quinoa rejuvelac, chickpea miso and other ingredients (Canada).



Almond-based

The Frauxmagerie Greek Frouxmage is a vegan certified product free from dairy, soy, oil and gluten. Made with almond, filtered water, apple cider vinegar, kosher salt, basil, thyme, rosemary, oregano and carrageenan (Canada).

Oat-based

Oatly! Tomato & Basil Oat Based Spread is described as a creamy plant-based bread spread with tomato and basil. The product is **made with oats**, fully hardened vegetable oils from coconut and rapeseed. It is free from milk and soy (Germany).

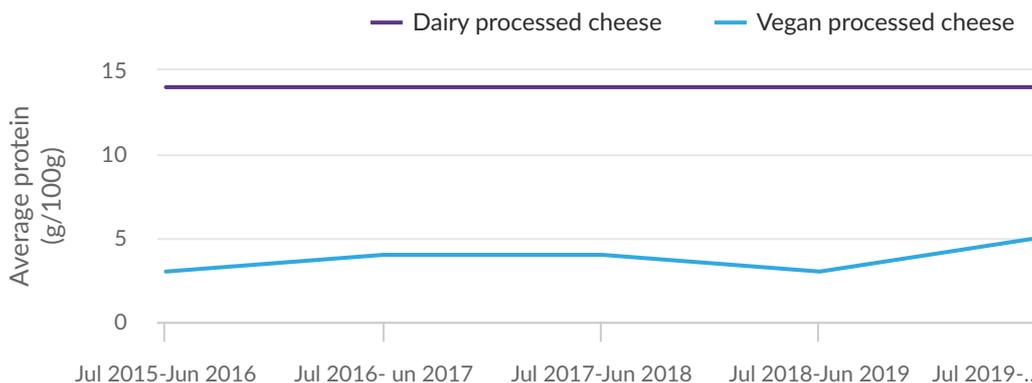


Protein content of vegan cheeses falls short of dairy versions

Not only is dairy cheese nutritious, but it is also a **highly flexible food** with a wide range of uses. In fact, cheese is often used by consumers to **replace meat** or **enhance the taste of vegetarian food**.

In order to appeal to flexitarians who are not beholden to vegan cheese on principle, non-dairy cheese must deliver on nutrition and functionality. As a group, vegan cheese falls short on protein – an important nutrient cheese is recognized for.

Global: average protein (g/100g) in processed cheese, vegan vs. dairy, Jul 2015-Jun 2020



The average protein content of vegan cheese has increased in the past five years, but still lags behind dairy cheese

Source: Mintel GNPD ([vegan processed cheese](#), [dairy processed cheese](#))

Next-generation vegan cheese will need to be more than just "dairy-free"

Vegan cheeses are starting to be fortified with important nutrients associated with the dairy category, including protein, calcium and even vitamin D and probiotics.



Calcium + vitamin D

Alpro Mango Flavored Plant Based Quark Alternative is based on **soy**, features calcium, protein and vitamin D. It is naturally low in fat and is dairy- and lactose-free (Netherlands).

3g of plant protein + good source of calcium

Miyoko's Cultured Vegan Farmhouse Cheddar is traditionally cultured vegan cheddar, and claims to 'melt great'. It is 100% crafted from plants, including oat milk, navy and garbanzo beans (US).



"Oil-free" with vegan probiotics

The Fraumagerie Botanic Boka is made with raw cashews, nutritional yeast, vegan probiotic, salt, bacterial culture and filtered water. It is free of oil, soy and dairy (Canada).



Meet the expert

Stephanie Mattucci

Associate Director, Global Food Science

With 10 years of experience in the food industry, Stephanie brings a food science background to her work at Mintel. She is responsible for analyzing and providing insight on ingredient and nutrition trends, regulations and food science innovations. She has a bachelor's degree in Food Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Read more by this expert | Get in touch

Disclaimer

This is marketing intelligence published by Mintel. The consumer research exclusively commissioned by Mintel was conducted by a Chinese licensed market survey agent ([see Research Methodology China for more information](#)).

Terms and Conditions of use

Any use and/or copying of this document is subject to Mintel's standard terms and conditions, which are available at <http://www.mintel.com/terms>

If you have any questions regarding usage of this document please contact your account manager or call your local helpdesk.

Published by Mintel Group Ltd

www.mintel.com

email: info@mintel.com

Help desk

UK	+44 (0)20 7778 7155
US	+1 (312) 932 0600
Australia	+61 (0)2 8284 8100
China	+86 (21) 6386 6609
India	+91 22 4090 7217
Japan	+81 (3) 5456 5605
Singapore	+65 (0)6 818 9850