



**COMPASSIONATE  
CUISINE**



# Cozy Comfort Foods

An Online Class with Chef Linda

[cheflinda@casanctuary.org](mailto:cheflinda@casanctuary.org)



## *Menu:*

Crispy Grilled Cheese Dippers

Spiced Cream of Tomato Soup

Essential Eggplant Parmesan

Sausage Mac and Cheese Calzones





# Spiced Cream of Tomato Soup

SERVES 4-6

When we asked our friends to tell us what their favorite comfort food was, tomato soup (and grilled cheese!) topped the list. Is it because it reminds of childhood, a time when our cares were few and maybe someone was cooking for us? Or is it because tomato soup is that good? I think, perhaps, it may be both. Older, maybe a little wiser, many of us are now doing the cooking so it seems like a good reason to give this classic soup a grown up and compassionate update, making it kinder and I think, a little tastier. To mellow out the tomato flavor, I added pumpkin, roasted red pepper, and a bevy of warming spices. Creamy coconut milk replaces dairy in this recipe and the combination of this particular plant-based milk choice works well with these spices and doesn't contribute a strong coconut flavor. It's the perfect soup to make as the weather gets cooler. The only thing that would make it better is having it with a vegan grilled cheese!

## Ingredients

- |   |  |
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| 1 tablespoon coconut oil (refined or unrefined)         | 1 whole roasted red pepper, chopped  |
| 1 medium onion, finely chopped, about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned pumpkin or cooked orange squash   |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt                          | 1 (15.5 ounce) can coconut milk  |
| 3 large cloves garlic, minced or grated                 | 1 teaspoon harissa paste, or substitute $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, optional |
| 2-inch piece of fresh ginger, grated                    | Juice from $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon, about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons                                  |
| 1 teaspoon ground cumin                                 | Up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, to thin, if desired   |
| 1 teaspoon ground coriander                             |  |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric                         |  |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cardamom                  | <u>To serve</u>  |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper              | Chopped cilantro   |
| 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes                           | Plain, unsweetened, non-dairy yogurt   |

## Directions

Heat coconut oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and salt. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onion starts to soften.

Stir in garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric, cardamom, and black pepper. Cook for a few minutes more until everything is fragrant.

Add crushed tomatoes, red pepper, pumpkin, coconut milk, and harissa. Stir and let simmer for about 15 minutes.

Stir in lemon juice. Taste and add more salt, lemon, or harissa, if desired.

Garnish with a swirl of yogurt and cilantro.





# Crispy Grilled Cheese Dippers

**MAKES 6 SMALL SANDWICHES**

**ALLERGEN NOTES: CONTAINS GLUTEN + INGREDIENTS THAT MAY CONTAIN SOY**

Grilled cheese is a comfort food classic. Too many vegans have given up on it because of the mixed results we often get from vegan cheese. Yes, the debate over vegan cheese rages on: there are brands we love and those we don't. The holy grail of vegan cheese seems to lie in its ability to melt. When you're making grilled cheese, the brand you choose had better melt or hearts will sink. In my effort to create an ooey, gooey vegan grilled cheese, a great many brands and methods were employed. Testing yielded mixed results: Sometimes the bread burned before the cheese melted, other times the cheese melted right out of the bread and into the pan. I turned my attention to the technique, believing that if I could create the right environment, any brand of cheese I chose would have to melt. Instead of bread, I used puff pastry to create a flaky, crispy pocket so that the cheese would "steam" inside and be sure to melt. Success: every brand I tried melted beautifully! The added benefit was that the pastry pockets were the perfect place to tuck in some of my other favorite pairings, creating a variety of delightful versions to nibble on and dunk into our favorite soup. This is no more difficult than using bread and a pan, but the results are wildly different, and in my opinion, so much better!

## Ingredients

1 sheet vegan frozen puff pastry (Pepperidge Farm is vegan), thawed in the fridge overnight  
6 slices of your favorite vegan cheese  
Olive oil and salt, optional

Vegan pesto  
Fig jam  
Apple butter

## Sauces

**Sriracha mayo** (combine 1 tablespoon of sriracha with 2 tablespoons of vegan mayo)  
**Quick remoulade** (combine 1 Tbsp ketchup, 2 Tbsp vegan mayo, 2 tsp chopped capers or relish, 1 tsp mustard, squeeze of lemon)

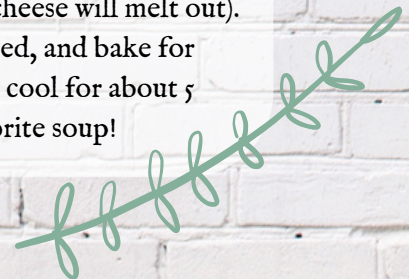
## Pairings

Thinly sliced apples or pears  
Dill pickle slices  
Caramelized onions  
Sauerkraut  
Pickled jalapeños  
Avocado  
Tomato

## Directions

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking tray with parchment. Lightly flour a clean work surface. Unwrap one sheet of pastry and lay it horizontal to the edge of the counter. Use a rolling pin to roll into roughly a 9-inch by 12-inch rectangle. Cut the dough in half. Score lines to create 12 squares.

To assemble, mix and match sauces and fillings with cheese on 6 of the squares. Using a finger wet with water, run it around the border of each square. Cut on the scored lines and pair tops with bottoms creating six sandwiches. Use a fork to seal the sides (if sides are not well-sealed, the cheese will melt out). Place on the prepared baking tray. Brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt, if desired, and bake for about 15 minutes, or until the dough is golden brown. Remove from the oven and let cool for about 5 minutes before serving (the cheese inside will be very hot!). Dip liberally in your favorite soup!





# Sausage Mac + Cheese Calzones

**MAKES 4 CALZONES**

**ALLERGEN NOTES: INGREDIENTS MAY CONTAIN GLUTEN + SOY**  
**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: BLENDER, FOOD PROCESSOR**

As if mac and cheese wasn't the best comfort food ever, I added a scrumptious and fun twist! To bump up the taste and add texture, I included crumbled sausage and then tucked every creamy bite into a calzone, taking mac and cheese from a side dish to a hearty main dish for all kinds of eaters. The mac and cheese is made with humble, healthy, and easy to find ingredients. Store-bought pizza dough makes the calzone assembly easy and stress-free; just leave the dough out in the morning so it can warm and rise for tender results. I recommend adding the cauliflower and broccoli for added flavor and nutrition, but leave them out if you prefer. Make the mac and cheese a day or two in advance for easy assembly. You'll have extra mac and cheese after making 4 calzones so either buy two pounds of pizza dough and make eight, or enjoy leftovers the next day!

## Ingredients

### Mac + Cheese

- 3 medium carrots, peeled and roughly chopped, about 2 heaping cups
- 1 large waxy potato, peeled and cubed, about 1 ½ heaping cups
- ½ medium onion, chopped rough, about ½ cup
- 3 large cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 tablespoons vegan butter or olive oil
- 2 cups unsweetened non-dairy milk
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed, or 1 ½ cups cooked
- ⅓ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- ¾ teaspoon ground turmeric

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 lb elbow or shell macaroni, plain or gluten-free
- 2 cups chopped broccoli and/or cauliflower, optional
- Salt, for water
- 4 vegan sausage links, crumbled by hand or ground in the food processor

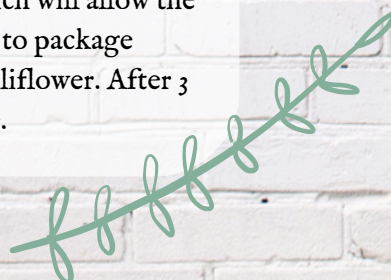
### Calzone

- 1 pound prepared and thawed pizza dough, set out on a floured surface at least 4 hours before using (cover with a clean towel)
- All-purpose flour for dusting
- Olive oil
- Salt and ground black pepper
- Shredded vegan mozzarella, optional

## Directions

To make the cheese sauce, place carrots, potatoes, onion, garlic, and butter in a large pot and cover with the milk. Bring to a boil, then cover, reduce heat, and simmer until the vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and carefully pour into the blender. Add the chickpeas, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, mustard, turmeric, and salt. Let the mixture cool for a few minutes before blending for about a minute, until smooth and glossy. Taste and add more salt or lemon juice if you like. (Remove the plastic knob to the blender lid and partially cover with a clean towel when blending which will allow the steam to escape.) Use the same pot to boil the macaroni in well-salted water, according to package directions. When the macaroni has about 3 minutes remaining, add the broccoli and cauliflower. After 3 minutes, or when the vegetables are tender, drain everything in a colander and set aside.

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## Sausage Mac + Cheese Calzones

**MAKES 4 CALZONES**

**ALLERGEN NOTES: INGREDIENTS MAY CONTAIN GLUTEN + SOY**

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: BLENDER, FOOD PROCESSOR**

### *Directions Continued*

Heat the same pot over medium-high heat. Add the crumbled sausage and cook while stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, or until it's lightly browned. Transfer the macaroni from the colander to the pot with the sausage. Stir in about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the cheese sauce and set aside (while trying not to eat it!).

On a lightly floured surface, cut the dough into 4 equal pieces. Use your hands or a rolling pin to stretch each piece out into a 6-inch circle. Spoon about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of macaroni onto half of the dough. Add a little shredded mozzarella, if desired. Fold the other half of the dough over and press with a fork to seal or use your fingers to pinch the dough. Brush the tops with olive oil and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Make a small slit in the top of the dough to let the steam escape. Use a spatula to transfer the calzones onto the baking tray. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown. Remove from the oven and let cool for several minutes before serving with extra cheese sauce.





# Essential Eggplant Parmesan

**MAKES ONE 9-INCH SQUARE CASSEROLE, SERVES 4-6**

**ALLERGEN NOTES: CONTAINS SOY + INGREDIENTS THAT MAY CONTAIN SOY  
MAKE AHEAD NOTES: BREADED EGGPLANT + TOFU RICOTTA CAN BE MADE A DAY OR TWO IN ADVANCE**

If you love eggplant parmesan and ever worried that as a vegan, you'd never have it again, worry no more! Besides being utterly scrumptious, this recipe demonstrates that there are plant-based solutions to everything, even techniques like breading food, which usually involves milk and eggs. The eggplant gets

baked to crispy perfection in the oven first and then it's layered with tofu ricotta for a rich, creamy result. You could also omit the step of making the ricotta and use store-bought mozzarella and sliced vegan provolone cheese, if you prefer. No fancy ingredients and no sacrifices to flavor and texture. Light, luscious, and authentically delicious, this dish is the perfect comfort food for all kinds of eaters.

Oh, and one piece of advice, make extra: You'll be glad you did!

## Ingredients

3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 large eggplant, about 1 ½ pounds, peeled  
+ sliced into in 1/8-inch-thick, round slices  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
½ cup unsweetened non-dairy milk  
1 cup breadcrumbs  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
½ teaspoon onion powder  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
3 to 4 cups of marinara sauce

1 batch of Tofu Ricotta (recipe below)  
1 ½ cups vegan mozzarella shreds, optional

## Tofu Ricotta

1 (14- to 16-ounce) package of firm tofu, pressed  
to remove excess water  
¼ cup nutritional yeast  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 teaspoons onion powder  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
½ teaspoon salt

## Directions

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line 2 baking trays with parchment paper. Spread the oil on the parchment paper and set aside.

Place flour and milk in two separate, shallow bowls. In a third bowl, mix together the breadcrumbs, oregano, basil, onion powder, garlic powder, and salt. To bread the eggplant, dredge the slices in flour, dip in the milk, then dredge in breadcrumbs. Place eggplant slices in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes then flip each slice and bake for another 10 minutes, until the eggplant is soft. Remove from the oven and reduce heat to 375°F.

While eggplant slices are baking, make the tofu ricotta. Finely crumble the tofu with your hands into a medium bowl. Add nutritional yeast, lemon juice, onion and garlic powders, and salt. Mix until all ingredients are thoroughly combined.

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## Essential Eggplant Parmesan

**MAKES ONE 9-INCH SQUARE CASSEROLE, SERVES 4-6**

**ALLERGEN NOTES: CONTAINS SOY + INGREDIENTS THAT MAY CONTAIN SOY**

**MAKE AHEAD NOTES: BREADED EGGPLANT + TOFU RICOTTA CAN BE MADE A DAY OR TWO IN ADVANCE**

### *Directions Continued*

Lightly oil a 9-inch square baking dish. Spread about 1 cup of the marinara sauce on the bottom of the dish. Arrange overlapping slices of eggplant over the sauce, covering the bottom of the dish. Spread half the tofu ricotta mixture on top of the eggplant and sprinkle with ½ cup of mozzarella. Make a second layer by spreading on a cup of sauce and arranging eggplant slices over the sauce. Spread remaining ricotta over the eggplant and sprinkle ½ cup of mozzarella, and top with 1 cup of sauce. Finish with a final layer of eggplant, the remaining sauce, and remaining mozzarella.

Cover with foil and bake for about 25 minutes, until bubbling around the sides. Remove foil for the last 10 minutes of baking.

Let sit for about 10 minutes to set before cutting and serving. This can be made a day or two in advance, then reheated in a 350°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Freeze extra for up to 3 months.