

Product Review: Daiya Cheese

Reviewer: Michelle Sass

Daiya Foods, Inc.
www.daiyafoods.com
Vancouver, BC Canada



Chef Jason asked me to review Daiya Vegan Cheese (www.daiyafoods.com), because I've probably eaten more of this gooey goodness than anyone else on the planet, aside from the Daiya folks themselves.

Daiya has become the talk of vegans from Yosemite to Ypsilanti well before most people have even had a taste of this new vegan cheese sensation. The product has been making the rounds at natural foods tradeshow this year and even won *VegNews* magazine's Best New Vegetarian Product Award at Expo West.

As part of Farm Sanctuary's *Veg for Life Campaign* (www.vegforlife.com), we encourage and assist restaurants with adding vegan options to their menu. That's exactly what I have been doing with Cruzer Pizza in Los Angeles which recently went out with the veal and in with the vegan! They are the first and, at the moment, the ONLY restaurant in the western U.S. serving Daiya. If you live in L.A. you must go there immediately and support this vegan venture.

Daiya graciously sent me a sample for the product tests with Cruzer Pizza and my first experience with it was at home in a grilled cheese sandwich with Trader Joe's cracked wheat sourdough and a drizzle of homemade pesto. Naturally, I wasn't going to bring it to the restaurant without trying it first. The cheese came shredded so I made a mixture with 80% mozzarella and 20% cheddar, the two flavors offered. It was simply OUTSTANDING! I could not believe how gooey it was. Since then I've had the

cheddar melted over steamed broccoli, and sprinkled heavily on burritos.

And let me tell you, it **MELTS!**

It melts really well in a professional pizza oven, too! With some meat analogues, my pals at Cruzer and I have created classics like Hawaiian and Pizza Margarita that are so good they are downright scary. A little trick I learned from the pros at Cruzer: cheese melts better when you put it over the sauce, not over the toppings, and this holds true with Daiya. The thicker the shreds, the gooier and stretchier it gets.

This new vegan cheese is not only delicious, but also made from all natural ingredients. But, it's not made from soy, rice or nuts, like many of the other leading dairy-free cheeses out there. Daiya has taken a truly revolutionary path – we hear their secret ingredient is none other than cassava, a plant native to South America and the third largest source of carbohydrates for human food in the world. In fact, the center of production for cassava is in Africa. Who knew the root of this plant would make such amazing vegan cheese?

Note to self: remember to make cheddar nachos with jalapeños tomorrow.

The Reviewer

Michelle Sass, Farm Sanctuary's California advocacy organizer, began her career as a resident tour guide in Yosemite National Park



and later led international visitors on cross-country tours of the U.S. As an American Sign Language interpreter, she has also led tours for deaf visitors. Michelle has been active with a number of animal protection organizations, including PETA and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, and her efforts have included directing publicity, fundraising and outreach campaigns. She has frequently appeared on television to promote a variety of animal protection causes, and is a regular guest speaker on radio shows, such as KCRW in Los Angeles and Go Vegan Radio, as a vegetarian restaurant reviewer and food critic. She was the original creator of the popular annual Bowling for the Animals fundraising event in San Diego, and completed the Humane Officer Program at the Animal Law Enforcement Academy.