



What Is Nutritional Yeast and How Do You Use It?

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Think of nutritional yeast—or nooch, as fans like to call it—as the Parmesan of the plant-based food world. Made from yeast cultures that have been deactivated and dried into tiny granules or flakes, melt-in-your-mouth nutritional yeast has a rich, fermented, cheesy flavor that’s perfect on everything from popcorn to pasta.

Once billed as a protein and vitamin supplement (hence the name), the savory sprinkle has gone mainstream, with well-known natural food companies such as [Bob’s Red Mill](#) and [Bragg](#) marketing their own brands alongside the old standard, [Red Star](#).

IS NUTRITIONAL YEAST GOOD FOR YOU?

Nutritional yeast is a wholesome ingredient, made by fermenting live *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* yeast in a glucose-rich nutrient medium such as beet sugar or sugar cane; then it’s heated to deactivate the live cultures, dried, and fortified with folic acid and B vitamins, including vitamin B12. Keep in mind that while nutritional yeast is a good source of vitamin B12, you shouldn’t rely on it to meet your needs of this vital nutrient.

Read more: [Why Every Vegan and Vegetarian Needs Vitamin B12](#)

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BAKER’S YEAST, BREWER’S YEAST, AND NUTRITIONAL YEAST?

Baker’s yeast, brewer’s yeast, and nutritional yeast all come from the same species of yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Baker’s yeast and brewer’s yeast, however, are sold with the live cultures intact and used to leaven bread or brew beer and other alcoholic beverages. By comparison, the live cultures in nutritional yeast get killed during the pasteurization process, which also enhances its savory flavor. Nutritional yeast is primarily a flavor enhancer that’s been fortified with B vitamins.

HOW TO USE NUTRITIONAL YEAST

In addition to substituting nutritional yeast anywhere you’d use grated cheese, you can use 1 to 2 tablespoons (or more) to:

- Season stews and casseroles
- Toss with popcorn (better than butter!)
- Turn blended cashews or beans into “cheese” spread
- Flavor homemade kale chips
- Add a creamy element to salad dressings
- Give savory baked goods a buttery flavor

HEALTHY RECIPES USING NUTRITIONAL YEAST

Once you’ve got your hands on some nooch, check out some of our [favorite nutritional yeast recipes](#), which harness the power of this cheesy powder to delicious effect.