Rye Pretzel Recipe with Vegan Beer Cheese

Ingredients

For the Pretzels

- ¾ cup plant-based milk
- 2 tbsp. vegan butter
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds (and more for sprinkling)
- 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 ¼ tsp. active yeast
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup rye flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. lye (sodium hydroxide)
- Large flake salt, for sprinkling

For the Beer Cheese

- 12 oz. beer (a lager is nice)
- 1 cup cashew pieces
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tbsp. light miso paste
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. smoked paprika
- 2 cloves garlic

Steps

1. Add the plant-based milk, butter, and caraway seeds into a small saucepan. Bring up to a simmer and let simmer for 5 minutes, stirring. Turn off the heat, and let the mixture cool down.

2. Add the yeast, brown sugar, and ¾ cup of warm water to your stand mixer. Let sit for 5 minutes to rehydrate, and then add the caraway milk mix. Turn on the mixer. Add the salt and flours, about half a cup at a time, until all the flour is incorporated. Use the bread hook to mix, or remove from the mixer and knead on a clean, lightly floured countertop for a few minutes. When you press your thumb into the dough and it springs back, you've kneaded enough. Cover with a clean cloth, and let sit for 10 minutes so the gluten relaxes.

3. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C). Line a baking tray with a silicone sheet. Divide the dough into 12 even pieces. One at a time, take the dough and roll it out into a snake, about 18 inches long. Form a big U, and wrap the ends around each other twice. Flip the ends down, and press them into the bottom of the U to join the ends to the bottom so the twisted part is in the middle of the U. Place the twisted dough on the prepared baking sheet, and repeat with the remaining pieces of dough.

4. When handling lye, use hand, skin, and eye protection and work in a well-ventilated space. Have a cloth and cold water ready to clean up any spills. In a plastic bowl, mix 4 cups of water with 2 tbsp. of lye. Using a plastic tool (I used a spatula), place the pretzels in the lye one at a time or in small batches. Let sit for 15 seconds, then remove from the lye and place on the silicone mat. Once all the pretzels have been dipped, sprinkle them with large flake salt and caraway seeds (if desired). Dispose of the lye by pouring down the drain, and following with 30 seconds of cold water. Place in the preheated oven, and bake for 15 minutes.

5. While the pretzels bake, start on the beer cheese. Add the beer and cashews to a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Boil for 10 minutes. Transfer the cashews and beer to a blender, along with the other ingredients for the beer cheese. Blend until completely smooth, and season with salt to taste.

6. Removed the pretzels once baked, and serve with beer cheese.