

VEGAN QUESO

SERVES 4-6

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2 Tablespoons chopped shallots
1 cup (about 7 ounces) chopped Yukon gold potatoes (you can leave the peel on)
¼ cup chopped carrots (about 1 small carrot)
1/3 cup chopped onion
1 cup water
¼ cup raw cashews (soaked for 1-5 hours and drained if you your blender is weak)
*5 Tablespoons unsalted butter (not vegan) or organic Earth Balance (vegan)**
2 teaspoons sea salt (use 1 ¾ teaspoons if using Earth Balance)
¼ teaspoon garlic, minced (about 1 medium clove)
¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 Tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice (optional, but add it if you have it)
¼ teaspoon black pepper
pinch of cayenne pepper
1 small jalapeno, seeds discarded, diced (about 3 Tablespoons)
½ cup frozen fire-roasted corn, defrosted
¾ cup cooked pinto or black beans, rinsed and drained if using canned
Accompaniments: tortilla chips, sweet potato chips, baked sweet potato wedges, baked fingerling potato halves

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1. In a medium saucepan, add the shallots, potatoes, carrots, onion and water and bring to a boil. Lower to a simmer and cook, covered, for 15 minutes, or until vegetables are very soft.
 2. Place the cashews, butter, salt, garlic, mustard, lemon juice, black pepper, and cayenne in a blender or food processor. Add the softened vegetables and cooking water to the blender or food processor and process until perfectly smooth.
 3. Pour sauce back into pot, and add the jalapeno, corn, and beans. Warm over medium-low heat for 4-6 minutes. Can be made ahead and reheated.
- *only use Earth Balance if you can't or won't tolerate butter. The dip turns out better with butter, in my opinion.*