

# An Unusual Culinary Column: Looking at Cauliflower Differently

By Karen Kain

Everywhere I look, I come across a recipe using cauliflower. I haven't really dabbled with this cruciferous vegetable, so I decided to give it a try.

Growing up, my mom served steamed cauliflower about twice a year. It was as though she was trying to torture us kids, and it was pretty clear that she didn't fancy it either. I discovered a long time ago, that if I put enough salt and butter on my veggies I could eat almost anything.

I am happy to report that cauliflower has come a long way. You don't have to look far to find it being used as rice, a pizza crust, buffalo wing appetizer, and of course in cheese soup. These dishes are all delicious but, let's not forget that cauliflower also has great nutritional values. It is naturally high in fiber and B-vitamins. Cauliflower is loaded with antioxidants and phytonutrients, which is said to help protect against cancer. If you don't put too much butter on it, cauliflower also helps in enhancing weight loss and a healthy digestion.

I started my cauliflower adventure making this Sexy Cauliflower Bisque recipe. I was interested in the soup because it just looked so appealing. I originally thought that the pomegranate was only for color, but it actually adds a nice texture and flavor. The soup came together nicely, with very little effort. I did not add the cream at the end, because I didn't think the soup needed it. I am not "anti" fat in my recipes, but after taste testing, I thought it was creamy enough. You can decide what you think.

Next, I made a pot of Cauliflower & Turmeric Soup. I am adding turmeric into my diet as much as possible and this dish was perfect. Turmeric and garlic together are a healthy combo. I love garlic, but you can add a bit less garlic if you are not a fan.

I wanted to finish this month's column with something different. In the past, I have been pretty skeptical about vegan cheese sauce recipes, but this one sounded delicious. I love eating cheese sauce, and I am happy to explore any good vegan substitutes I can find. Although this recipe calls for a few different ingredients, it is pretty easy to make. The texture is definitely spot on. I am happy to report that my finicky meat loving friends were surprised by how much they enjoyed this dish. This sauce is really delicious. After we finished eating the



cauliflower, we used it for dipping our steamed artichokes in. This sauce would also be great served over tortilla chips, pasta and roasted veggies.

All of these dishes were super, but before you go crazy adding cauliflower to your diet, proceed with caution. If you are on blood thinners, you should be monitoring your cauliflower intake. This is due to the high levels of vitamin K, which can react adversely with blood thinners. Please check with your doctor.

## Sexy Cauliflower Bisque

### Ingredients:

- 2 Cups whole milk
- 2½ Cups vegetable stock
- ½ Cup dry white wine, optional
- 1 Small head cauliflower, about a pound, cut into florets
- 1 Large gold potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 Small onion, chopped
- 1 Clove garlic, crushed
- 1 Teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 1 Cup day old bread, cubed
- ⅓ Cup heavy cream, optional
- ⅓ Cup pomegranate seeds
- Chopped chives for garnish

### Directions:

Combine the milk, vegetable stock, cauliflower, potato, onion, garlic, and thyme in a large saucepan. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. While the soup is cooking, melt the butter in a large skillet on medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally until golden brown about 2-4 minutes. Add the bread and cook for 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Let the soup cool enough to puree in a blender in batches until smooth. Return the soup to the pan then add the cream and stir to combine. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve garnished with the croutons, pomegranate seeds and chives.

## Cauliflower & Turmeric Soup

### Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Cups chopped yellow onion
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 6 Cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon ground turmeric
- 1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2¼ Cups vegetable broth
- ½ Teaspoon salt
- 1 Small head of cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 Teaspoon rice wine vinegar
- 2 Teaspoon brown sugar
- ½ Teaspoon pepper
- ¼ Cup sour cream
- 2 Tablespoons chopped chives

### Directions:

In a large stock pot heat up the olive oil to medium high. Add the onion, thyme and garlic. Sauté for 5 minutes stirring a few times. Add the turmeric and stir constantly for 1 minute. Remove from heat. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour and ½ cup vegetable stock until smooth. Add the flour mixture to the pot. Return the soup pot to the stove on medium high heat. Add the salt, cauliflower, and remaining vegetable stock. Bring to a boil then reduce to medium and simmer covered for 15 minutes. You want the cauliflower to be tender. Remove the soup from the heat and allow to cool. Put the soup into a blender in batches and puree. Once pureed to a nice creamy texture return the soup to the pot and add the vinegar, brown sugar and pepper.

## Roasted Cauliflower and Vegan Cheese Sauce

### For the cauliflower -

- ### Ingredients:
- 1 Cauliflower
  - 2 Tablespoons olive oil
  - ½ Teaspoon salt,
  - 1 Teaspoon chili powder
  - ½ Teaspoon ground cumin
  - ½ Teaspoon smoked paprika
  - ½ Teaspoon garlic powder

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut the cauliflower into florets, the same size the better. Rinse under running water. Shake off the water, but don't pat dry. Place the florets into a bowl and add the remaining ingredients and toss to thoroughly coat. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 35 minutes, turning the florets halfway through. The florets should be browning in spots.

## For the cheese sauce -

### Ingredients:

- 1 Cup non-dairy milk, I used almond
- ¼ Cup nutritional yeast
- ¼ Cup cooked, mashed sweet potato
- 2 Tablespoons potato or corn starch
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ Teaspoon salt
- ½ Teaspoon dry mustard
- ⅛ Teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅛ Teaspoon onion powder
- ⅛ Teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 10-Ounce can Rotel diced tomatoes, drained with the liquid reserved
- A few dashes of Tapatio hot sauce, optional

### Directions:

Put all the ingredients except the Rotel tomatoes and Tapatio into a blender. Puree on high speed. Pour into a saucepan and cook, stirring constantly over medium high heat until boiling. This heats up fast, so keep your eye on it. Reduce heat and cook stirring until the mixture becomes very thick. Add the tomatoes and Tapatio. If the sauce is too thick, add a teaspoon of the tomato liquid. Serve with the warm cauliflower bites. This sauce goes great over tortilla chips. You can use this as you would a nacho sauce.

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