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VEGAN MAGAZINE

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Spinach & Cheese Pizza Rolls

By: Elizabeth Shah

When you're vegan, entertaining can be a high-pressure situation when you're hanging out with omnivores. (And aren't we always?) There's that whole, "Oh boy, what's the vegan gonna bring?" vibe.

No worries, you got this one. Vegan spinach & cheese pizza rolls are so darn appetizing, these cheesy, garlicky little pinwheels are destined to be a hit. I wouldn't be surprised if they quickly become your go-to party recipe. They're great as a finger food, and just the right size to nosh on in front of the tube for game-day or movie-night get-togethers.

If you have leftovers—you probably won't!—just pack 'em up for lunch. You can warm them up for a minute or two in the microwave, and don't forget the pizza sauce for dipping.

Minutes after I first shared this recipe on social media, I got a message from a grateful mom telling me her daughter had just invited a gang of friends over for an impromptu party the following night. She (mom, not daughter) was "freaking out" about what to make. So she whipped up a batch of these pizza rolls, and the girls scarfed them down in proper, teenage-girl fashion. Such a cool mom!



Not only are these vegan pizza roll appetizers beyond delish, all of the ingredients here are whole-food healthy. To tailor this recipe to your diet, you can use store-bought, whole-wheat pizza dough or make your own oil-free and/or gluten-free crust. Whatever you choose, these pizza rolls are so fun to make and eat, you kinda forget they're actually good for you.

Spinach & Cheese Pizza Rolls

Serves 8 (Serving size: 1 roll)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 14-ounce package extra firm tofu (pressed for 10 minutes or squeezed by hand to release water)
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1/3 cup nutritional yeast
- 1 tablespoon tahini (sub 2 teaspoons grapeseed oil or omit if desired)
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning (+more for top)
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- Optional: 2-4 cloves garlic (to add to tofu ricotta, for extra garlicky pizza rolls)
- Sea salt to taste
- 2 cloves garlic finely diced
- 2 tablespoons finely diced shallots (about 1 small shallot)
- 4 packed cups baby spinach chopped
- 22 ounces of fresh pizza dough (GF/oil-free if desired, store bought or make your own)
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes and Italian seasoning for topping
- Pizza sauce or marinara sauce for dipping

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F degrees.
2. Take the pizza dough out ball of the refrigerator and any packaging, and allow to come to room temperature, at least 15 minutes. (Check directions on the packaging and follow them if different.)
3. Set out a 9-inch round or square baking dish or pan. (Use non-stick or lightly oil.)
4. To make 'basil tofu ricotta': In a food processor, combine the tofu, basil, nutritional yeast, tahini, Italian seasoning, lemon juice, garlic powder and onion powder. (Add optional garlic cloves, if using.) Process until completely blended and creamy, stopping to scrape down the sides as needed, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add sea salt to taste, and pulse to blend in.



5. Heat 1 tablespoon of water in a saute pan over medium high heat. Add the shallots and garlic, and saute 2-3 minutes, or until soft. Add the spinach and a pinch of salt, and saute until well cooked and no longer releasing liquid. Drain any liquid from the spinach.
6. On a floured surface, roll out your pizza dough into a large rectangle about 1/4 thick, about 15 3/4 inches long (for a 9-inch x 9-inch square pan) or 16 inches long (for an 9 inch round pan.)
7. Spread the tofu mixture evenly over the dough. Drop spoonfuls of spinach, spread out evenly over the tofu mixture.
8. Roll the dough up lengthwise into a log. Using a very sharp knife, cut into sections (about 8 pieces, 2" wide for a round pan or 9 pieces, 1 3/4 wide for a square pan.) If the sections flatten as you cut them, unroll each one a bit and re-roll to get a nice round shape.
9. Place the sections in the baking dish/pan, so that the edges touch. You can push them down just a little if needed. They will expand a bit as they cook, so they just need to touch, but not be crowded. If desired, brush with a bit of oil (skip if oil free) and top with Italian seasonings and crushed red pepper flakes.
10. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the dough is cooked through and brown on top. To test, slide small, sharp knife between two rolls in the center of the pan and spread apart a bit to see if dough is cooked.
11. Serve with pizza sauce or marinara sauce for dipping.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Shah is a lifelong writer, recovering type-A, food and wine aficionado, and whole-food, plant-based recipe developer at [Healthy Midwestern Girl](#). She loves sharing simple (and sometimes not so simple!), healthy & utterly delicious vegan recipes. Hang out with Healthy Midwestern Girl on on social media.

