

VANCOUVER ISLAND VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

The Veggie Platter



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Product Review: Soymilk Machines

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We have investigated several brands of soymilk making machines over the past few months. Most also make rice milk, almond milk, and tofu. Benefits include nutrition, cost-savings, and taste.

Nutrition

Milk made from soymilk machines is fresh! It is cooked more closely to the traditional method (too involved for most people without the machine).

With soymilk machines we can ensure that we use organic, non-genetically modified beans. We can fortify it (see *Tips* page 2). Fresh soymilk may contain nutrients not available from that on the shelf. Finally, fresh soymilk needs far less (if any) sweetener.

Cost-savings

Assuming conservatively that commercial soymilk costs \$1.50 per liter more than the cost of the dry beans, then the top-rated machine will pay for itself in under 6 months if you drink one liter of soymilk per day. After that you would be saving \$550 per year per liter of soymilk you drink per day.

Taste

We were amazed by the taste of fresh soymilk. Many of us cannot tolerate drinking commercial soymilks unless they are sweetened. But we all agree that fresh soymilk is delicious even plain! Direct from cooking, it's a hot beverage like coffee.

Soaked or dry beans?

According to registered dietician and co-author of *Becoming Vegan*, Vesanto Melina (<http://www.nutrispeak.com>) "soaking beans overnight does not present a risk for bacteria as long as the soy beans are cooked, which they are by all commercial soymilk machines. Soaking is preferred to using dry beans as it increases mineral bioavailability immensely." Soaking also activates enzymes, reduces phytates, and has been practiced for centuries. Commercial soymilk makers also soak their beans.

Using dry beans seems convenient but we found that remembering to soak is easy when you got into a routine. So for the reasons above, we strongly recommend soaking soybeans. All machines can use soaked beans and most can use dry.

Which machine?

Each machine is scored in several categories below. We looked in stores and online at many brands and include here the only contenders which could not be ruled out directly. We tested the SoyQuick, SoyaJoy, SoyToy, Soy Wonder and Nutritionist by Salton.

Taste

The SoyToy left more okara in the milk than the SoyQuick but it can be strained (a strainer is included). Those very picky about any okara left in the milk may want to strain milk from any machine. Milk from dry beans is slightly beanier. The Soy Wonder had more okara in the milk than any other but it did not affect the actual taste of the milk much. The Nutritionist is so finicky that it stopped during the cycle and we had to throw the beans away and start again. It never completed a cycle for us, even after multiple attempts following the instructions to the letter.

Almond milk made with the SoyToy is not as smooth as that from other machines unless strained. Only the SoyQuick (and SoyaJoy) could make rice milk.

Clean-up

The SoyQuick basket has much less grooves to clean than others and no nooks and crannies for okara to get stuck in. The only place that sometimes took a few extra seconds to clean is the optional chute for dumping in soybeans. The included cleaning cloth helps make clean-up quick.

Manual

The manuals have strengths in different areas. SoyQuick has complete and detailed instructions to cover every situation but it has the least info on why to choose organic non-genetically modified beans, health benefits of soy, and recipes. The SoyaJoy manual is sparse. The SoyToy has excellent recipes and other information and easy to follow illustrations, but some important steps were assumed or left out—such as rinsing the soybeans! The Nutritionist manual is good and has more recipes than any other.

Quality

This category refers to how well made the machines are. The SoyQuick dominates largely because of the filter cup with holes directly in the steel rather than

“...Soymilk Machines” continued on page 2

“In my view, the best way to take advantage of soy’s health benefits is to follow the example of the traditional Asian diets and stick with whole foods.”

—John Robbins
see www.foodrevolution.org/what_about_soy.htm

IN THIS ISSUE

Soymilk Recipes	3
Book Review	4
SPCA Article	5
Discount Guide	7
Events	8

The Vancouver Island Vegetarian Association is a non-profit association dedicated to promoting and providing information about vegetarianism.

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"...Soymilk Machines" continued from page 1

wire mesh; the cup appears more solid. Nutritionist and Soy Wonder also lose points for plastic parts.

Safety

Only the SoyQuick and the Nutritionist were UL or CSA certified. Certification is essential to ensure mechanical and electrical safety. Only the SoyQuick has a spout, which is important for ease of pouring scalding fresh soymilk. The SoyToy has no safety instructions, sharp blades (rather than serrated), and steam shoots out during operation. The Nutritionist heating pad is outside of the jug, it also has sharp blades and lacks a grounded plug.

Convenience

If you are making soymilk in a busy morning, the difference between 13–14 minutes of the SoyQuick and 27–30 minutes of the Soy Toy or Nutritionist can be significant. The SoyQuick also has extra programs that others do not such as grind only or cook only.

Price

The Nutritionist www.esalton.com is the cheapest and some proceeds go to charity. Next best in price is the overall winner, the SoyQuick, marketed by a Vancouver company www.soymilkquick.com. It includes a tofu press and coagulator as well as cleaning cloth. The SoyaJoy www.soymilkmaker.com, Soy Wonder www.miracleexclusive.com and SoyToy (including strainer) www.soytoy.com are much more expensive and will incur duties of around \$90 to get into Canada. Check websites for exact current pricing.

Summary

SoyQuick- the clear winner: good price, great quality, easy to clean, lots of tips in the manual, includes tofu press and coagulator (we loved the fresh tofu and wouldn't have gotten around to trying it if not included).

SoyaJoy—machine is the same as SoyQuick but it costs more, has no extras, the manual is not as good, and we got no response from customer service. It is included in the review only for completeness.

SoyToy—the best machine for using dry beans although we recommend soaked. Compared to the SoyQuick it costs more, takes longer to cook and clean, leaves more okara in the milk, and needs a kitchen setup where the steam venting will not be a hazard.

Soy Wonder—a good machine only if seeing the milk while it is being made is more important than quality construction (the container is clear plastic). Also called Eagle.

Nutritionist by Salton—only consider this machine if you collect kitchen appliances; this is the cheapest brand. It is too finicky to even use, and the lowest quality in many respects. Also sold as Salton Fresh Food Center and Salton Fresh Soy Food Center.

Tips for making good soymilk from a machine:

- **CLEAN RIGHT AWAY**—by far the most important tip. Soy protein gets sticky fast. If you don't clean up in the first five minutes you can mess up the machine. Although most machines are easy to clean, it is still crucial to do so right away. Pay particular attention to the screen on the bottom of the filter cup, be sure to clean with the right kind of scrubby cloth, and be sure to get most of the soy protein out. Be especially vigilant about cleaning right away after making rice milk.
- **Experiment** (but not too much). For example a small amount of pumpkin seeds in place of some soybeans makes the milk creamier and adds a mild flavour (as well as providing zinc and omega 3s). Also try replacing small amounts of soybeans with sunflower seeds, almonds, pumpkin seeds (which soak with the soy beans) as well as hemp, flax, or sesame seeds (which should be added just before you make the milk). However, start with only small amounts of these other ingredients, as any deviations too far in amount will result in burnt or runny milk. Cocoa or coffee beans can also be added in with the soy beans. Do not add fruit or berries directly in the machine—they will curdle the milk.
- After cooking, a little sweetener (e.g. sucanat, molasses, sugar, maple syrup) or flavouring (vanilla, cocoa powder, cinnamon) can be added.
- Read your manual.
- Register your machine.
- Visit the website for your machine for machine specific tips and extra recipes. ●

RATINGS:	SoyQuick	SoyaJoy	SoyToy	Soy Wonder	Nutritionist
Taste (soaked):	10	10	9	8	0
Taste (dry):*	7	7	8	7	0
Taste (rice):	10	10	0	0	0
Taste (almond):	10	10	9	8	0
Price:	8	6	5	8	10
Clean-up:	8	6	5	4	3
Manual:	8	4	8	7	9
Quality:	10	10	8	7	6
Safety:	10	8	4	7	4
Convenience:	10	10	8	8	8
Customer Service:	10	0	8	7	6
AVERAGE	9	7	7	6	4

* We do not recommend the use of dry beans

The SoyQuick/SoyaJoy machines were tested by Dr. Wilson of Iowa State University <http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/fshn/faculty/wilson.htm> and found to reduce Soy Trypsin Inhibitor activity by 96% (a minimum of 80% is required). This assures us that the cooking method is appropriate for optimum health. Dr. Wilson had not tested any of the other machines in our review.

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