

We eat a lot of bagels with lox at our house, and we like a little more “pizzazz” than just plain ol’ cream cheese. According to my husband, Les, “schmear” is the appropriate Yiddish word for bagel-worthy cream cheese, and it implies a smoother, spreadable consistency than what you get in the store-bought bricks. But the first time I did the shopping for us as a couple, I developed a serious case of sticker shock in the pre-made spreadable cream cheese section. And for such a *tiny* container of it, not to mention that the “whipped” varieties are basically half cream cheese, and half air!

It was pretty easy to replicate Les’s favorite, which is scallion cream cheese; to be fair, he says our homemade version is not only more economical, but also tastier. I love being able to customize the flavors, without a bunch of additives we can’t even pronounce. My double-batch version here calls for plain Greek yogurt, but you could just as easily substitute sour cream. At the end, I’ve suggested additional flavor variations. I hope you find one you love!

Ingredients:

2 bricks (8 oz. each) regular or Neufchatel cream cheese
1/4 to 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt (whole or 2%, or substitute sour cream)
1/2 tsp. dried dill
1/2 tsp. dried minced garlic
1 small bunch scallions, washed and trimmed – white and green parts sliced thin*

Instructions:

Put both packages of cream cheese into a mixing bowl, straight from the fridge. Whip the cream cheese by itself for about 1 minute, then add the yogurt (begin with 1/4 cup, add more as you like) and whip until creamy. Stop a couple times to scrape down the sides and across the bottom of the bowl.

When the whipped mixture has the appearance of cream cheese icing, add the dill and dried minced garlic and whip again just until blended. Add all of the scallions; it may seem like a lot, but it’ll be just right once it’s mixed.

Blend on a low speed until fully incorporated, then transfer to a covered bowl and refrigerate. The dried garlic needs at least a few hours to soften and spread its flavor through the cream cheese. If you’re making this for something right away, I’d recommend scooping out what you need immediately before adding the garlic. Otherwise, you’ll have a few potent, crunchy bites.

Les has taught me to adore this stuff, especially on a lightly toasted “everything” bagel. But we also use it in other ways—on crackers, as a spread on sandwiches, and even slathered on the inside of a tortilla in our breakfast burritos.

Spreadable Scallion Cream Cheese – Comfort du Jour

Want to elevate your happy, *Comfort du Jour* style?

Like so many things I make at home, cream cheese is a blank canvas just begging for interesting variations. Swap out the dill for any other dried herbs you like, but I'd suggest using them sparingly until you have a feel for the concentration of flavor—these herbs really open up after some time in the fridge. Mix in chopped pickled jalapeno, capers, sun-dried tomatoes, pepperoncini or olives, but blot them dry first on paper towels.

Prefer sweeter spreads?

Mix in 1 Tbsp. of powdered sugar along with 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon or 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, and fold in raisins, chopped toasted nuts or dried cranberries. Les would argue that sweet cream cheese is not “authentic” (you can't take the NYC outta the boy), but I say, make whatever makes you happy!