



Photo © Sean Hawkey.



THE CASHEW JOURNEY

What are the steps that Equal Exchange cashews from small-scale farmers go through before ending up in your hand? **LET'S FIND OUT.**



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STEP 1

Cashew trees are large evergreens that thrive in tropical climates.



STEP 2

The tree flowers and a small fruit begins to grow at the bottom of the flower. Attached to the bottom of the fruit is the cashew nut. The nut is not in fact a true tree nut, but is really the fruit of the tree, since it contains the seed for future germination. For this reason, the cashew fruit is often called the false or accessory fruit.



STEP 3

The fruit can be yellow, orange, or red.



STEP 4

When the cashew fruit falls to the ground, the farmers remove the nuts and gather them into 50-lb. sacks.



STEP 5

The nuts are dried for three days in the sun to eliminate unwanted moisture.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing blue denim jeans, holding a large quantity of cashew nuts. The nuts are light brown and have a characteristic kidney shape. The background is slightly blurred, showing a green metal structure on the left and a dark, textured surface on the right.

STEP 6

The nuts are then brought to the processing plant.

A close-up photograph of cashews being sorted through a corrugated metal drum. The drum has a pattern of circular holes. Cashews are visible on the surface of the drum, and some are falling through the holes. The image is partially obscured by a red and white graphic element on the right side.

STEP 7

The cashews are sorted by size through a corrugated drum.

STEP 8

To loosen the shell the nuts are put into a steamer for about 50 minutes.



A row of industrial cashew cracking machines in a factory setting. The machines are made of metal and have a yellowish-brown patina. They are arranged in a line, and the background shows a concrete wall and a yellow vertical beam.

STEP 9

The cashews cool overnight. The shell is then carefully cracked open (to keep it whole) and the nut is removed.



STEP 10

Next the cashews are placed on trays and baked in an oven. This oven is solar-powered and the nuts bake for 12 hours.

A close-up photograph of a person's open palm holding about six cashew nuts. The nuts are light brown and have a rough, textured surface, indicating they still have their outer film. The person is wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans. The background is slightly blurred, showing some industrial or workshop-like structures.

STEP 11

The nuts still have an outer film that must be removed.

A woman wearing a white lab coat and a white face mask is focused on sorting cashews. She is seated at a table covered with a large pile of cashews. Several colorful plastic bowls (blue, green, red, purple) are arranged around her, some containing sorted cashews. The background shows other workers and more cashews, indicating a busy processing facility.

STEP 12

The outer layer of film is removed and the cashews are polished one at a time. The nuts are sorted into piles of wholes, halves, and pieces.

STEP 13

The cashews are put into aluminum bags and vacuum-sealed to keep their freshness.





STEP 14

Finally, the vacuum-sealed bags are placed in boxes and delivered to port to be shipped to the U.S. and ultimately to you!





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