

cheese



Dairy MAX
YOUR Local Dairy Council



Cheese is a food made from milk that is produced in a wide range of flavors and textures. It is formed by coagulation of the milk protein casein.

What Is Cheese?



Natural cheese is made from four basic ingredients including milk, salt, a good bacteria and rennet, an enzyme. From there, cheesemakers can adjust the basic recipe to make all the cheeses we know and love.

HISTORY OF CHEESE

According to ancient records passed down through the centuries, the making of cheese dates back more than 4,000 years. No one really knows who made the first cheese, but according to legend, it was made accidentally by an Arabian merchant who put his supply of milk into a pouch made from a sheep's stomach as he set out on a day's journey across the desert. The rennet in the lining of the pouch, combined with the heat of the sun, caused the milk to separate into curd and whey. That night he found that the whey satisfied his thirst and the curd (the cheese) had a delightful flavor that satisfied his hunger.

Nutrition Information

Cheese provides important nutrients including calcium, protein, phosphorus, vitamin B12, selenium, riboflavin, iodine and niacin. Cheese is a delicious, nutritious and versatile food. You can add it to other dishes or eat it by itself. It's convenient and portable. There are more than 300 varieties of cheese - including American, cheddar, mozzarella and colby - many of which are available in various flavors, forms (chunks, slices, cubes, shredded, grated, crumbled, sticks, spreads) and packages to meet cooking and snacking needs.

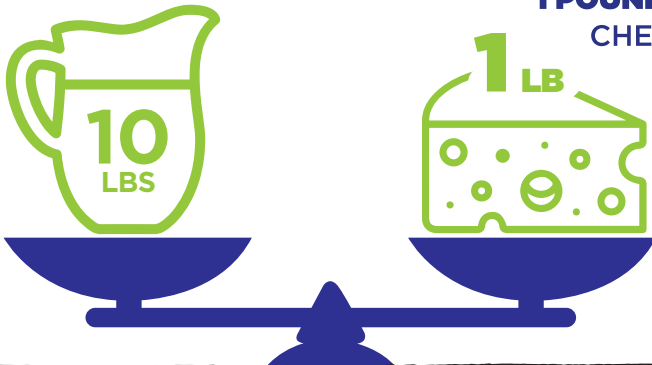
Lactose Intolerant?

For those with lactose intolerance, cheese can be an important source of calcium. Natural cheeses such as cheddar, colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella and Swiss contain minimal amounts of lactose, because most of the lactose is removed when the curds are separated from the whey in the cheese making process.

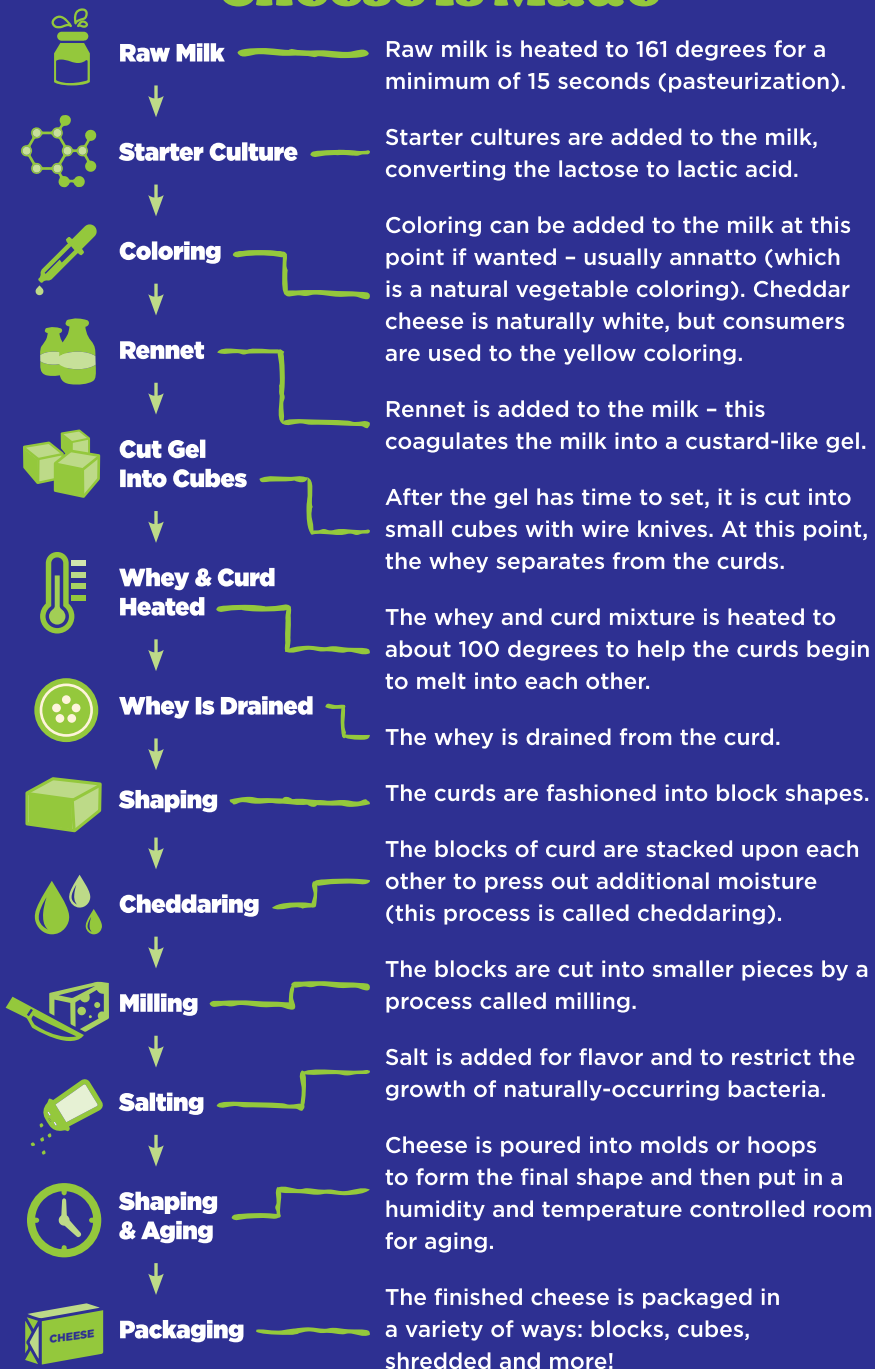


FUN FACT

IT TAKES **10 POUNDS**
OF MILK TO MAKE
1 POUND OF
CHEESE.



How Cheddar Cheese Is Made



Cheese Categories

Fresh Cheeses

These cheeses have a high moisture content, typically made with the addition of lactic acid cultures. Cottage cheese, cream cheese, feta, mascarpone, ricotta and queso blanco are all examples of fresh cheese.

Hard Cheeses

Also known as aged cheeses, this group includes Parmigiano-Reggiano, Asiago and Gruyere. These cheeses are hard to the touch because most of the moisture has been removed. This makes them good for grating and gives them a long shelf life. Most of these cheeses have intense flavors.

Washed-Rind Cheeses

Washed-rind cheeses include tallegio and Limburger. They are bathed in salted water, brandy, wine, or liquor. Washing develops a strong flavor, retains moisture, and changes the color and texture of the cheese. The exterior of washed-rind cheese may be bright orange or brown; the interior is often soft and pungent.

Blue Cheese

These cheeses are also called blue-veined cheeses, markings that make them easy to recognize. The color comes from the blue mold that gives these cheeses their very strong flavor. Blue cheeses include Gorgonzola, Danish blue cheese and Roquefort. Blue cheeses crumble easily, making them ideal to use in salads.

Semi-Soft Cheeses

In this category are the gourmet cheeses brie, Camembert and mozzarella. A wide variety of these cheeses are made with whole milk that melts well when cooked. These cheeses are usually pale in color and can easily be sliced. Some semi-soft cheeses are flavored with dried vegetables or spices. Other examples include Monterey Jack and Muenster.

Processed Cheese

The term processed is used to describe cheeses that are a combination of natural cheese and ingredients like emulsifiers or artificial flavors that increase shelf life. Examples are American cheese and processed cheese spreads.



How Should Cheese Be Stored?



- **Refrigerate all cheese** between 35° and 40° Fahrenheit in the original wrapping until ready to use.
- It is best to store cheese in a **refrigerator drawer** so it does not absorb flavors from other foods.
- If cheese is removed from its original packaging, **wrap it tightly** with plastic wrap or foil to prevent air pockets. Once cheese is exposed to air, molding and dehydration may occur. To protect cheese from mold, it is best to double-wrap cheese and place it in a sealed container after each use.
- **Strong-smelling cheeses**, such as Limburger, should be well-wrapped and kept in a separate container to prevent odors from transferring to other foods.
- Most **hard cheeses** and **processed cheeses** can be frozen; however, freezing may change the texture. For this reason, thawed cheese is best used crumbled or shredded in salads or cooked dishes.

Did You Know?

If you are looking to lower the sodium in your diet, try to choose cheese based on firmness and age. In general, softer, less-aged varieties contain less sodium. However, lower sodium and lower-fat cheeses are also available in many varieties.





PARTY PERFECT Cheese Crostini

Ingredients

1 cup mascarpone

1-3 ounces of low-fat cream
cheese, softened

½ cup Swiss or Fontina, shredded

1 baguette, sliced into ¼ inch slices

½ teaspoon dried thyme

⅓ cup Marcona almonds, chopped

Fresh cracked pepper

Tapenade:

½ red onion, finely chopped

¼ cup capers, coarsely chopped

1 tomato, seeded, chopped

¼ cup Kalamata olives, pitted,
chopped

1 teaspoon olive oil

Directions

1. Mix tapenade ingredients in a separate bowl. Set aside.
2. Mix the cheeses, thyme, almonds and pepper together. Set aside.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toast the baguette slices on a baking sheet for 10 to 15 minutes, turning slices once. When crostini is browned, remove from oven.
4. Spread the cheese mixture on top of the bread, turn the oven to broil and return crostini to oven just until cheese melts. Remove from oven and top with tapenade.



For more delicious and cheesy
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REFERENCES

Cheese and nutrition. Copyright 2023 Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and National Dairy Council.

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