

# CHEESE or FROMAGE

Cheese is a solid derivative of milk. It is produced by coagulating the protein (CAESIN) in milk so that it forms curds - usually by adding RENNIN (outer agent used to separate the milk protein) - and draining off the liquid (WHEY). Cheese then undergoes a ripening process, during which it changes in taste, texture and appearance and each variety takes on its own particular characteristics. Some cheeses develop veining during ripening, while others form holes or 'EYES'. Veining is caused by a bacteria in the cheese, which may occur naturally, or may be introduced. All cheeses develop a rind or crust of some sort, or are given one artificially such as red wax rind of EDAM. Some cheeses, such as BRIE & CAMEMBERT, develop a mould on the outside surface which produces enzymes which help ripen the cheese from outside towards the center.

Most cheese is made from 'EWES' milk with a small amount made from 'COWS' or 'GOATS' milk. The type of milk and the different techniques used to separate the curds and whey and ripen the cheese result in the many different types of cheese. Climate, vegetation and seasonal changes can also influence the finished cheese, which means that some varieties can only be produced in a certain area and cannot be produced in large quantities or under factory conditions. CHEDDAR, however, lends itself well to factory techniques.

Although CAESIN makes up 78% of the milk protein, there are other proteins present in smaller quantities, but they are soluble and are drained out with the WHEY. The whey may be then processed to curdle the remaining protein and used to make low fat cheese such as RICOTTA - a moist, unsalted Italian cheese.

## Types of Cheese

1. *Semi Hard & Hard Cheese* :- A semi hard cheese is produced by removing as much of the whey as possible from curd, often by mechanical pressing, before moulding and ripening. Hard cheeses undergo a further process which involves heating the curd so that it shrinks and hardens, making it possible to extract even more of the whey. These cheeses are left to mature much longer than the softer cheeses. Semi hard cheeses include Cheddar and Edam, while the most familiar hard cheeses are Parmesan and Pecorino.

2. *Fresh & Soft Cheese*:- A true soft cheese is made by coagulating un-pasteurized milk with rennet. The addition of a starter just before rennet is added ensures a clean acid flavour. The majority of soft cheeses, such as Camembert, are foreign in origin.

Today many soft cheeses are made from skimmed milk, which means they are lower in calories & fat. Varieties of soft cheese are defined and labelled according to the amount of milk fat and water they contain. Skimmed milk soft cheese must by law contain less than 2% milk fat and not more than 80% water. They are generally low in calories, soft and smooth with a bland or slightly acid taste. Examples include Fromage Frais.

Those labelled as low fat soft cheese have 2 - 10% milk fat and up to 80% water. Textures may vary from smooth and yogurt-like lumpy textured cottage cheese.

Medium fat soft cheese must contain 10 - 20% milk fat and not more than 70% water. It is white with a smooth but slightly granular texture & lightly acid flavour.

Full fat soft cheeses are often called creamy and are frequently confused with the higher fat cream cheeses. Full fat means they must contain at least 20% milk fat and not more than 60% water.

The higher fat cream cheeses are often referred to as double cream cheese. One example is Caboc.

3. *Cream Cheese*: - It can be classified as a soft cheese. Its manufacture is very similar to that described above, but is made from cream rather milk. A typical cream cheese is a soft bodied unripened cheese with a rich, full and mildly acid flavour. It has a rather granular texture, buttery consistency and a high content of milk fat which gives it a creamy appearance. It is usually moulded into small cylindrical, square, rectangular or round shapes of varying sizes. There are Two recognized varieties of cream cheese - Single & Double Cream Cheese.

Single cream cheese is made from single cream with an optimum fat content of 20 - 25%. About 1.2 ltrs. of this cream will yield about 6 cheese weighing 100 - 125gms. each. Carefully prepared it will keep for a week in a refrigerator, after which it deteriorates quickly both in flavour and appearance.

Double cream cheese is produced from cream containing about 50 - 55% butter fat. Usually 1.2 ltrs. of this cream will yield 8 double cream cheeses weighing 100 - 125 gms. each. This cheese dose not keep quite long as single cream cheese do.

4. *Acid Curd Cheese*: - This cheese is frequently classed as a soft cheese, but is fundamentally different. The curd are formed slowly by the action of lactic acid upon the caesin. Acid curdling is completely different action from rennet coagulation and by yields of high acidity, quick drainage properties & somewhat granular texture. The cheese has a clean, acid flavour, and a slightly granular soft, spreadable flavour. It has a short shelflife & must be eaten in a fresh state.

Cottage cheese is an Acid Curd Cheese, but is made from pasteurized, skimmed milk. The curd is cut into small cubes & slowly heated to develop the right body and texture. The whey is drained off, & the curd washed several times & cooled. The washing of curd produces the familiar lumpy appearance of cottage cheese. Salt & single cream are then added & the cheese is packaged in cartoons. The additions of the cream give the cottage cheese a final fat content of 4%. This, combined with the high moisture content, gives the cheese its soft velvety texture. Cottage cheese has poor keeping qualities and should be eaten while fresh.

5. *Low Fat Cheese*: - This cheeses, such as Cheddar and Cheshire, have been produced in response to the needs of people who want to reduce the amount of fat in their diet. They are made in similar way to traditional hard cheeses but with half their fat content and a consequent reduction in calories. Low Fat Cheeses tend to be mild flavoured. For use in cooking where a stronger flavour is required either add a pinch of mustard or keep the cheese in the refrigerator for 2 - 3 weeks to allow the flavour to mature and develop.

6. *Processed Cheese*: - This is made by combining cheese with a number of other ingredients, such as flavourings and cream, and melting it down. A processed cheese contains at least 50% dry matter and 40% fat. A cheese spread contains less dry matter. Processed cheese are sold in portions wrapped in foil, often shaped in triangles cubes and very thin slices. They can be used to make sandwiches, in hamburgers or in appetizers.

### Storing Cheese

Store cheese in a covered, ventilated china dish or in a bowl with a plate on top, or wrap in foil and store in the refrigerator. Keep it in the door, dairy compartment or bottom of the refrigerator so that it does not get too cold. Leave cheese at room temperature, still in its paper or other wrappings to prevent drying out, for about 30 minutes before serving.

If you want cheese to become hard and dry for grating, leave it exposed to the air in a cool, dry place for a couple of days, turning it from time to time. Grated cheese can be stored in a polythene bag in the refrigerator for several weeks.

Cheese can be frozen, though some varieties freeze better than others, specially the higher fat varieties. Once thawed, all cheese should be eaten as soon as possible as it deteriorates quickly.

## Serving Cheese

Cheese may be served at the end of a meal or it may form the main course for a light lunch. When planning a cheese board, serve some of the following accompaniments with it:

1. Biscuits which may be savoury or salty, plain or semi-sweet. Rolls or bread (French, Granary style, Wholemeal or Rye), cut into chunks and put into a separate bowls or baskets. Fruit bread is also delicious with cheese.
2. Butter, margarine which is low in saturated fats or a low fat spread.
3. Salad vegetables such as lettuce, celery, chicory, tomato wedges, small whole radishes, watercress, carrot sticks and spring onions.
4. Fresh fruit such as apples or grapes.

Cheese and wine have a natural affinity : they can be served together for informal parties, lunches or dinner parties. For a dinner party, the cheese can either be served French style, between the main course and the dessert (in which case it eaten with wine served with the main course) or at the end of a meal. As a general rule, for serving wine with cheese serve richer cheeses with full bodied wines and lighter, creamier cheeses with lighter red or white wine.

**Cooking with Cheese:-** Cheese goes well with many other ingredients viz, eggs and pasta, and is a flavouring for many sauces and toppings. When cooking cheese, remember that too fierce a heat can make it stringy. When added to a sauce, it should not be allowed to boil. Hard cheese can be grated for cooking, but softer cheese are best sliced, shredded or crumbled before adding to a dish.

Well matured cheese gives the best flavour; if using a mild Cheddar, add a little mustard for extra flavour if wished - adding an extra quantity of a mild cheese will not give a better depth of flavour. Cheddar is good in baking; use Lancashire, Cheshire or Leicester for toasting; Mozzarella for pizzas, while crumbly cheeses such as Feta or Roquefort are best for mixing into salads and dressings.

## Country wise Famous Cheese

### British Cheese

1. Cheddar -  
Is the most well known and famous English cheese now initiated and produced in many other countries. It is a hard cheese with a closed texture and varies in colour from pale straw to golden orange. It has a full nutty flavour. A traditional cheese served with Ploughman's Lunch.
2. Cheshire -  
The oldest British cheese has a slightly crumbly texture & a mellow, slightly salty flavour. It is available white or orange. It provides a good topping for grilling.
3. Blue Cheshire -  
Is a deep golden coloured cheese kept under special conditions to allow blue veining to develop. It has rich creamy, strong tangy flavour and good in cheeseboard.
4. Double Gloucester -  
Is a hard cheese with a firm smooth texture. It is a golden orange colour & has a delicate creamy flavour. It is ideal for cooking & eating.

5. Cotswold with Chive -

Is a double Gloucester cheese with the addition of chopped chives, which give it a distinctive flavour. Good for the cheeseboard.

6. Sherwood with Pickle -

Is a double Gloucester cheese with the addition of pickle. Good for cheeseboard.

7. Leicester -

Is a rich russet coloured cheese with a mild mellow flavour and open textures. It is good for cooking particularly in Welsh Rabbit.

8. Lancashire -

It is a white, soft textured crumbly cheese with a mild flavour. Good in soups and casserole.

9. Caerphilly -

Is a moist white cheese with a mild, slightly salty flavour and closed texture. Good for the cheeseboard and good served with bread, celery, apples or other fruit.

10. Wensleydale -

Is a mild white cheese. It is closed textures but crumbly, and has a slightly salty flavour. It goes well with fruit especially apples.

11. Sage Derby -

Is a closed textured Derby cheese, flavoured with chopped sage leaves which give a characteristic green marbled effect.

12. Blue Stilton -

The 'King of Cheeses'. Its distinctive blue veining is the result of a mould which is introduced into the cheese during manufacturing. Between the veining the cheese should be a rich creamy colour, a dry white cheese is a sign of immaturity. A mature Stilton has a strong but subtle flavour, best appreciated when eaten with biscuits. Port is the traditional accompaniment.

13. White Stilton -

Is a very white crumbly cheese, much milder than blue stilton, but with a slightly sour flavour. A good substitute for Greek Feta cheese.

14. Windsor Red -

Is Cheddar flavoured and marbled with red wine. It has a crumbly texture and a flavour similar to mild Cheddar.

## French Cheese

1. Babybel -

Is a smooth full-fat soft cheese with a red wax coating. It has a mild slightly sweet flavour, similar to Gouda. Good for the cheeseboard.

2. Bleu D'Auvergne -

Is a blue cheese made primarily from cow's milk but including some goat's and ewe's milk. It is a rich cheese with a sharp salty taste.

3. Bleu De Bresse -

Is a small, dark blue veined cheese made from unskimmed cows' milk. It has a soft creamy texture with a thin grey-white rind and a rich piquant flavour.

4. Boursin -

Is a soft cream cheese made from enriched cows' milk. It is available flavoured with garlic, herbs or black pepper.

5. Brie -

Is one of the best known French cheese. It is made from cows' milk in large rounds about 35 cm in diameter and 2.5 cm thick. It has a white mould edible crust which encases a soft, pale cheese with a delicate creamy flavour. Good for the cheeseboard.

6. Camembert -

Is made in creameries from the milk of the Normandy dairy herds. Prepared in small rounds with creamy yellow outer crust.

7. Caprice Des Dieux -  
Is a small oval loaf shaped cheese made with enriched cows' milk. It is similar in texture & flavour to Brie but rather richer.
8. Chevre -  
Is the generic name for goat's milk cheese. They are small and quite strong in flavour.
9. Coeurmandie -  
Is a small heart-shaped creamy Camembert type cheese with a velvety white rind.
10. Fromage Du Manet -  
Is a full fat, soft cheese flavoured with garlic & herb. Good for the cheeseboard.
11. Neufachatel -  
Is a cows' milk cheese from Normandy. A soft, dark yellow cheese with a soft white coating and a slightly salty flavour.
12. Petit Suisse -  
Is a soft cream cheese made from whole milk enriched with extra cream. It is sold in small cylindrical shape & unsalted with little sour flavour.
13. Port Salut -  
Is a semi hard yellow cheese, which was first made by monks in the 13th century. It is almost identical to St. Paulins.
14. Rambol Pepper -  
Is a processed cheese spread made from Emmenthal cheese & cream. It is flavoured with pepper & flamed with Cognac.
15. Roquefort -  
Is a blue cheese made from Ewes' milk curds sprinkled with breadcrumbs and specially treated with mould to give the characteristic blue-green veining. Good for the cheeseboard & salad dressings too.
16. St. Julien -  
Is a full fat processed cheese with a spreadably consistency. It is flavoured with parsley & garlic, hazelnuts, walnuts or almonds.
17. St. Paulin -  
Is a semi-hard medium fat cheese with a bright orange rind.
18. Tartare -  
Is a light, soft cream cheese flavoured with garlic & herbs, similar to Boursin.
19. Tomme Au Raisin -  
Is an uncooked pressed cheese which doesn't mature with keeping. This smooth, slightly chewy cheese is coated with a mixture of dried black grape skins and pips, which add interest to its mild flavour.

### Italian Cheese

1. Bel Paese -  
Popular cheese with a firm white texture and a thin dark yellow rind. It has a mild, delicate, slightly salty flavour. Good in cooking.
2. Dolcelatte -  
Is a milder, creamier version of the Gorgonzolla. It is off white in colour with blue green veins running through it. Good for the cheeseboard.
3. Gorgonzolla -  
Is one the most famous cheese throughout the world. It is named after the village of Gorgonzolla near Milan, where it was originally made in caves over a 1000 years ago. It is soft textured & straw coloured, with a characteristic blue-green veining. It has a rich, sharp, sometimes slightly spiced flavour.
4. Mozzarella -  
Is traditionally used for Pizza toppings. It is a pale, smooth, closed textured cheese with a mild flavour.

5. Parmesan -

Is the most famous Italian hard cheese. Made from skimmed cows' milk, it takes at least 2 years to mature & acquire its strong flavour. It is an excellent cooking cheese & is used grated on many Italian dishes.

### Swiss, German & Austrian Cheese

1. Emmental -

Was originally a Swiss cheese but now also produced in Denmark & Germany. It is a dull yellow sweet cheese with holes evenly distributed.

2. Gruyere -

Is a hard Swiss cheese with a full fruity flavour.

3. Swiss Petit Gruyere -

Is processed Gruyere cheese sold in boxed foil wrapped triangles.

4. Bavarian Blue -

It is a creamy, rich, full fat soft cheese with blue veining and a white mould surface.

5. Bavarian Soft -

Is a full fat, soft cream cheese, sometimes flavoured with horseradish.

6. Bavarian Smoked -

Is a cream coloured processed cheese, smoked for added flavour.

7. Cambozola -

Is also known as German Blue Brie, is a full fat soft cheese with an edible mould crust, manufactured in a similar way to French Brie.

### Dutch & Scandinavian Cheese

1. Edam -

Although named after the town of Edam in Holland, this cheese now has a trading in Alkmaar. It is a pale yellow ball shaped cheese, weighing about 2kgs. with a characteristic red wax rind.

2. Gouda -

Is another famous Dutch cheese made from whole cows' milk. It has a creamier and stronger flavour than Edam.

3. Danish Blue -

Also known as Daniblu, is a milk white cheese with a close pattern of blue green veins. It has a rich creamy consistency and a strong tangy flavour.

4. Havarti -

Is a Danish cheese made in rectangular loaf shape or flat rounds. Pale yellow in colour with small irregularly distributed holes.

5. Jutland Blue -

Is a Danish cheese with a high fat content and blue veins. It is more mature & therefore stronger than Danish blue cheese. Best reserved for eating.

6. Orange Roll -

Is a Danish blue cream cheese, made from cream which has undergone various heat treatments. It is flavoured with Grand Marnier and Orange, and coated with chopped hazelnuts.

7. Svenbo -

Is a fairly new hard Danish cheese. It is made in flat rounds or rectangular blocks and has a dry yellow rind which may be coated with paraffin

8. Jarlsberg -

Is a hard cheese, revived in Norway this century. It is creamy yellow with large holes and a soft smooth texture.