Secrets, Stories & Statistics of America’s Edible Obsession

cheese!
LOOKING BACK

Some things only get better with age: Friendships. Blue Jeans. Wine. And especially cheese.

For centuries, all across the globe, families and friends have come together to celebrate with cheese, whether over gooey Brie and crusty bread in France; fresh, crumbly feta and watermelon salad in Greece; cheddar-topped nachos in Mexico; or mozzarella and heirloom tomato pizza here at home. There are now hundreds of varieties around the globe—including 300 in the United States alone. Everywhere, cheese is truly the life of the party. Let’s be honest, it’s not a celebration without it! But beyond that, cheese is a nutritionally rich way to add calcium, protein and minerals like phosphorus to the diet every day, helping build strong bones and a healthy, energetic body. So remember, both at home and wherever you roam: Say cheese!

The Legacy of Cheese

One of dairy’s big delights has come a long way and there have never been so many varieties.
SAY ... GRUYÈRE?

You’ve sampled Swiss, mozzarella and cheddar ... but how about a cave-aged raclette? Or blue cheese drizzled with honey? Turns out there are over 2,000 kinds available—just check your local farmers market or dairy aisle. Below are a few categories to know.

**Varieties of Cheese**

**Hard Aged Cheeses**
Parmigiano-Reggiano, Gouda and other hard cheeses have typically been matured longer (and therefore contain less moisture). They’re drier, crumbly and strong flavored.

**Soft and SemiSoft Cheeses**
Creamy Brie and Camembert are aged from the outside in, so they develop a thick rind.

**Medium Cheeses**
Some of the most popular types are cheddar, Swiss and Gruyère. Swiss varieties get an extra bacterium in processing that gives them their “eyes.”

**Fresh Young Cheeses**
Some require no aging: ricotta, cottage, queso fresco and the ever-popular mozzarella.

**Processed Cheeses**
Made with traditional cheese and emulsifying salts, these long-lasting cheeses can be sold in pre-wrapped slices, party-ready balls and more.
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW CHEESE?

The food is rich in nutrition and secrets. We separate fact from fiction.

**Fiction:** The saturated fat found in cheese contributes to heart disease.

**Fact:** Decades ago cheese got a bad rap, but recent studies have found that a higher intake of some types of dairy foods are associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), stroke and/or heart attack. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee agrees and takes it a step further, stating that dairy products are associated with reduced risk of Type 2 Diabetes and lower blood pressure. As with anything, enjoy in moderation.

**Fiction:** If you’re lactose intolerant, you can’t eat dairy.

**Fact:** We’ve got good news: Most people with lactose intolerance can consume certain dairy products with few to no symptoms. Try eating hard cheeses that are low in lactose: cheddar, colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella and Swiss. If you introduce dairy gradually back into your diet, you may find your tolerance level lifted. Cheese is such a fantastic source of nutrients that it’s definitely worth a try!

**Fiction:** Cheese should be minimized in the diet due to its high sodium content.

**Fact:** In spite of what you may have heard, cheese contributes just 8 percent of the sodium in the U.S. diet, on average. If you’re concerned, try lower-salt cheeses: Swiss, Monterey Jack, ricotta, cheddar, mozzarella and Brie. All kinds of cheeses can be enjoyed. A little sodium is well worth the other nutrients that come with it, from vitamin A to phosphorus to protein. Cheese is the number two source of calcium in the American diet, too.
Meet SwissLane Dairy Farms

The Oesch family has been committed to caring for their cows, community and environment for over 100 years. On their modern dairy farm, several generations work to care for over 2,000 cows. The commitment to producing high quality milk is the same today as the first day, while welcoming new family members and embracing technology.

“Quality cheese starts with quality milk, and we strive every day to produce a great product that our family and yours can enjoy.”

Annie Link, 4th generation Michigan dairy farmer
## Just Add Cheese!

Almost any meal can be made better and more nutritious with cheese, thanks to its high vitamin and protein content—plus its mouthwatering flavor. Read on for easy, quick ways to enjoy cheese any time:

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| **BREAKFAST** | Spread **cream cheese** or even **ricotta** and honey on a toasted bagel.  
                An egg-topped English muffin would be nothing without a layer of toasted **cheddar**.  
                Add **queso fresco**, **mozzarella** or **feta** to your omelet. |
| **LUNCH**   | Make a salad with your choice of fresh veggies, grilled chicken and **herbed Boursin cheese** or slivers of **Parmesan**.  
                Toss a layer of **cheddar**, **Swiss** or **provolone** into your favorite sandwich.  
                Fill a tortilla with black or pinto beans and **shredded cheese** to make a burrito on the fly. |
| **DINNER**  | Make your own pizza! Top pizza dough with sliced tomatoes, a drizzle of olive oil, basil and **fresh mozzarella**, then bake.  
                Grill up quesadillas with an array of colorful vegetables and **cheese**.  
                Supplement your standard mac and cheese recipe with different kinds: **Gruyère** and **fontina**, for example. |
| **SNACKS**  | Add **cheese** and deli meat to crackers for do-it-yourself snack bites.  
                Throw a couple of **string cheeses** into your lunch bag to enjoy whenever you need an energy boost.  
                Top **cottage cheese** with pineapple for a sweet treat. |
“Cheese has always been an important part of my diet, whether it’s large curd cottage cheese, soft homemade ricotta cheese, or the vast array of beautiful, cultured cheeses. I’ve always kept an assortment in my fridge to serve alone, or with crackers, garnishes, salads, crusty breads, or even as a dessert course.”

—Martha Stewart
Consider cheese your refrigerator’s secret ingredient—many varieties are affordable and provide an irreplaceable package of nutrients. Beyond tasting great, the health benefits can’t be underestimated: Dairy products can build strong bones, lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of diabetes and some cancers and (dieters, take note) help you maintain a healthy weight. In fact, a growing body of research suggests that consuming just three servings of low-fat dairy products a day as part of a balanced, low-calorie diet may help you get—and more importantly, keep—a trim figure.

Cheese by the Numbers

A 1.5-OUNCE SERVING OF CHEDDAR CHEESE CONTAINS:

306 milligrams of calcium, the same as a glass of milk!

Necessary nutrients such as vitamin A, zinc and phosphorus.

10.5 grams of protein, the same as 1.5 ounces of roast turkey.

1 SERVING OF CHEESE = 4 DICE-SIZED CUBES

A growing body of research suggests that consuming just three servings of low-fat dairy products a day as part of a balanced, low-calorie diet may help you get—and more importantly, keep—a trim figure.

3 SERVINGS:

The amount of dairy you should consume per day, according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

For more information
Call 1-800-241-MILK (6455)
www.MilkMeansMore.org

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