



# CHEESE FACTS



## History

Cheese is the oldest and most natural way of preserving milk, with evidence suggesting that cheese making was first introduced in the UK over 2000 years ago. The skills were passed down through the farming community and today cheese is still made on the farm or in large factories known as creameries.

There are over 700 varieties of British Cheese currently available in the UK. These include the six varieties of Cheddar (mild, medium, mature, vintage, Farmhouse and West Country), regional variations (Caerphilly, Cheshire, Derby, Double Gloucester, Lancashire, Red Leicester, Stilton and Wensleydale) and speciality cheeses (such as Cornish Yarg, Shropshire Blue, Somerset Brie and Cornish Camembert).



## Usage

Cheese is enjoyed by over 98% of British households. Cheddar is a clear favourite, accounting for over 57% of the market, and is bought regularly by 94% of households.

The British consume around 700,000 tonnes of cheese a year (including fromage frais). This equates to 11 kgs per person per year or just 30 grams per person per day - roughly half the daily amount consumed in continental European countries.

Cheese is used mostly for sandwich fillings, in day to day cooking and as an everyday snack with biscuits. While Cheddar is still the favourite, there is an increasing trend towards some stronger tasting variants.

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## Nutritional Value

Cheese provides a number of nutrients. A 30 gram portion of Cheddar for example contains about 10 grams of fat, 7.5 grams of protein, 222 mg of calcium and 125 calories plus phosphorus and Vitamin B12.

The calcium in cheese is well absorbed by the body, where it helps with the development and maintenance of strong bones and teeth. A calcium rich diet plays an important role in helping to prevent osteoporosis.



## Storing and Serving Cheese

Cheese should always be stored in a cool environment (5°C - 10°C) - the bottom of the refrigerator is best. It should be wrapped tightly in foil or stored in an air tight container to prevent it drying out. Most cheeses do not freeze well. The exception is Stilton which should be wrapped in foil or cling film and can be kept for up to three months. Defrost slowly in the fridge overnight.

To bring out the true flavour and aroma of cheese, it should always be served at room temperature. Take it out of the fridge at least two hours before serving and leave loosely wrapped, until ready.

## British Cheese - yes please!

The British Cheese Board aims to increase consumption of cheese made by its members and provides information about cheese as part of a balanced diet.

What are the benefits of eating cheese?

- Hard cheese contains essential nutrients - protein, calcium, phosphorus and vitamin B12
- It is versatile and convenient to use as part of any meal occasion
- There are more than 700 named cheeses now produced in the UK alone

The British Cheese Board was formed in 1997 and its members account for the majority of cheese made in the UK.



For further information on the British Cheese Board and its members and the cheeses they produce go to [www.britishcheese.com](http://www.britishcheese.com) or e-mail us at [enquiries@britishcheese.com](mailto:enquiries@britishcheese.com)

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