



A BRITISH CHEESE FOR ALL SEASONS



Varieties of Cheese

With over 700 varieties available, there is a British cheese to suit every taste and occasion. This rich diversity of cheeses produced in the UK is a result of the different cheese-making processes used, the variations in types of milk and the different lengths of time given to the maturing process. Subtle variations make all the difference. Animals fed on different types of pasture will produce cheeses with wonderfully varied and individual flavours, and a slight difference in production technique can dramatically alter the texture of a cheese. Additional ingredients such as herbs, spices and fruit can also evoke distinctive flavours that enhance the cheese experience.

Britain boasts seven key categories of cheese: fresh, soft, semi-hard, hard, blue, rind-washed and blended. Such choice - and there are new cheeses being created all the time - means that the potential for sumptuous and interesting cheeseboards, cheese dishes or cheese snacks is ever-increasing.



Categorising Cheese

HARD CHEESES

The most popular type of cheese, with the world-famous Cheddar amongst its ranks, hard cheeses are perhaps the most well known variety. Hard, dense and with a low moisture content, they are ripened over a period of months depending on the strength desired. They also keep very well. In addition to the five varieties of Cheddar (mild, medium, mature, extra mature, and vintage), other types include Double Gloucester, Leicester and Derby.

SEMI-HARD CHEESES

These cheeses are either unpressed or lightly pressed and can be eaten young, when they have a wonderfully light flavour and texture, or allowed to ripen and produce a stronger, fuller taste e.g. Lancashire, Cheshire, White Stilton, Wensleydale and Caerphilly.

SOFT RIPENED OR BLOOMY RIND CHEESES

Neither cooked nor pressed, these cheeses have a semi-soft consistency and have been surface ripened (the cheese is sprayed with a mould - *penicillium candidum* - which ripens from the outside in). When reaching their full ripeness, the creamy inside of the cheese temptingly oozes out from within the rind when cut e.g. British Brie and Camembert.

BRITISH
CHEESE
BOARD



BLUE CHEESES

The most famous Blue cheese is the classic Blue Stilton, also known as the 'King of English Cheeses'. These cheeses are veined with intricate blue marbling created by the introduction of a harmless blue mould - penicillium roqueforti - into the cheese. They enjoy a strong and distinctive flavour and are an integral part of any cheeseboard. Varieties include Blue Stilton, Blue Wensleydale, and Shropshire Blue.

RIND WASHED CHEESES

These cheeses are delightfully piquant in taste and include some of the strongest cheeses in the world. The rind is, as the name suggests, regularly washed with liquids ranging from brine to brandy, while the cheese is being ripened. This keeps the cheese moist and supple and prevents it from drying out. These recipes date from the early days of the monasteries in Britain. Examples include Stinking Bishop.

FRESH CHEESES

Usually unsalted or only lightly salted, these cheeses are uncooked and do not undergo a maturing process. They enjoy a mild and light flavour with a deliciously moist texture e.g. cream cheese, cottage cheese, fromage frais and Mozzarella.

BLENDED CHEESES

Many cheeses have their flavours enhanced by the addition of herbs, spices or fruit to the ingredients. This makes for a wonderfully unique type of cheese. Look out for Cheddar with Ale and Mustard, White Stilton with Cranberries or Apricots, Double Gloucester with Chives and Onion, or Cornish Tarragon.

Cheese is a natural food. Hard cheeses contain protein, calcium, Phosphorus and Vitamin B12, so adding a matchbox sized portion of cheese to your daily diet is not just delicious, but it can fit well into a balanced healthy diet.



Preparing the perfect cheese board

Select three or four cheeses - from different groups - aiming to present a mix of colours and textures. Serve at room temperature garnished with fruits, chutneys and dried fruits or nuts. Use a separate knife for each cheese and when finished wrap each piece separately and put in an air tight box at the bottom of your fridge.

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 or e-mail us at enquiries@britishcheese.com

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