



COOKING WITH CHEESE

Cheese is a natural food and one of the most versatile and tasty foods available. Budding chefs out there will be delighted to know that it is also a superb ingredient for cooking.

Whether you simply sprinkle it over a cooked dish, grill it on toast or use it as one of the main ingredients in a recipe, it can be incorporated into any snack or meal to guarantee a delicious taste sensation.

Hard cheese contains protein, calcium, phosphorus and Vitamin B12 so adding cheese to your meals can help to add key nutrients. And if you are looking for even healthier options, reduced fat varieties are available which work well in many cooking applications.

With over 700 British Cheeses available, there is a wealth of delicious new tastes to explore.

Hard cheeses, such as Cheddar, Double Gloucester, Leicester or Derby, are the most commonly used in cooking, and can be incorporated easily into any recipe, whilst creamy Lancashire is reckoned to be the best cheese for cheese on toast.

The crumbly, such as Cheshire, Wensleydale, Caerphilly and crumbly Lancashire, are also great for cooking, and can literally be crumbled into your favourite dish. They are also great for crumbling onto salads and as they have less than half the salt content of continental salad cheeses like Feta they can also be a healthier option for those people watching their salt intake.

The soft cheeses, such as British Brie or Camembert, melt perfectly into appropriate recipes, delivering a delicious creamy taste. Add crispy bacon or sliced grapes for a wonderful taste.

The blue cheeses are great for adding some colour and extra flavour to a dish. Try a mature Stilton for a stronger taste or opt for some of the other flavoursome blue cheeses, such as Shropshire Blue, Blue Wensleydale or Blue Cheshire, all of which cook perfectly.



Top Tips for Cooking with Cheese

- For more efficient melting, shred, grate or cut the cheese into smaller pieces before adding to the other ingredients
- When making a sauce, add cheese as the last ingredient, stirring over a low heat until melted. If the sauce mixture is extremely hot, remove from heat and cool for several minutes before adding the cheese
- Bake cheese dishes or casseroles at 180°C / 350°F / Gas Mark 4, to prevent overcooking the cheese
- Add cheese toppings to casseroles during the last 5 - 10 minutes of baking to allow cheese to melt perfectly
- Grill cheese-topped dishes 3 to 4 inches from the heat source. Watch carefully as the cheese will melt quickly.

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Recipes

You will find some nutritious new cheesy recipes in this leaflet, covering the range of British Cheeses available. We have also suggested alternative cheeses that would work just as well in the recipes, to help you explore the wealth of British cheeses on offer.

Creamy Spinach & Stilton Soup

Stilton gives this deliciously creamy soup a fabulous flavour. Serve it chilled until icy cold in summer - or enjoy it piping hot when the weather is chilly. Try Shropshire Blue or Sage Derby as alternatives.

Serves 4

15g (1/2oz) butter
1 bunch spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
7 x 250g (9oz) bag fresh spinach thoroughly washed
600ml (1 pint) vegetable stock
1 x 200g (7oz) pack of low-fat soft cheese
2 tablespoons cornflour
450ml (3/4 pint) milk
75g (3oz) Blue Stilton, crumbled
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons fresh soured cream or natural yoghurt
chopped fresh spring onions and parsley to garnish

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan and saute the spring onions for about 2 - 3 minutes until softened, but not browned.
2. Add the spinach and vegetable stock and heat until almost boiling. Reduce the heat and simmer covered, for 5 minutes.
3. Transfer the mixture to a blender or food processor and add the soft cheese. Blend for about 15 - 20 seconds until smooth and velvety. Return to the saucepan.

4. Blend the cornflour with 3 - 4 tablespoons of the milk and add to the soup with the remaining milk and most of the crumbled Stilton. Bring to the boil, stirring constantly until thickened. Reduce the heat and cook gently for 2 minutes, season to taste.

5. If serving hot, ladle the soup into warmed bowls. Serve at once, garnished with the soured cream or yoghurt, the reserved Stilton and chopped fresh spring onions and parsley.

Cook's tips: If you're serving the soup chilled, don't add the remaining milk until the soup has already thickened. Stirring in the cold milk after the soup has already thickened will save time as it will cool much more quickly and will also prevent a skin forming on the surface. Be sure to serve it icy cold, so chill in the fridge for at least a couple of hours.

For a change, substitute two bunches or bags of watercress for the spinach.

Roast Mediterranean Vegetables with Melted British Brie

Roasted vegetables taste fantastic - the roasting concentrates their flavours. Serve them topped with a generous wedge of British Brie for a colourful, healthy meal. Somerset, Cornish and Scottish Brie are all equally delightful.

Serves 4

2 tablespoons virgin olive oil
175g (6oz) baby new potatoes, halved
1 red onion, cut into wedges
1 small aubergine, cut into chunks
1 large courgette, sliced
1 red and 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
a few sprigs of fresh thyme and rosemary
4 tomatoes, sliced into wedges
4 wedges of Somerset brie, weighing about 50 - 75g (2 - 3oz) each
basil leaves, to garnish
ciabatta or foccacia bread, or French baguettes, to serve

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas Mark 6.
2. Pour the olive oil into a roasting pan and add the new potatoes, red onion, aubergine, courgette and peppers. Season well with salt and pepper, add the cumin seeds, then toss together to coat. Add the sprigs of thyme and rosemary.
3. Roast for 30 minutes, then add the tomatoes and wedges of Somerset Brie and roast for 3 - 4 more minutes.
4. Serve, garnished with basil, accompanied by warm ciabatta or foccacia bread, or crusty French baguettes.

Cook's tip: Try using Somerset Camembert instead of Brie for a delicious alternative.

Lancashire Cheese and Tomato Omelette Wedges

This is a very tasty, healthy way to serve pasta - in a thick omelette with lots of vegetables and tasty Lancashire cheese.

Serves 4 - 6

75g (3oz) pasta shapes, such as spiralli or farfalle
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 bunch spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
1 medium courgette, finely chopped
1 red or yellow pepper, deseeded and sliced
5 eggs, beaten
6 tablespoons milk
1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs (parsley chives or basil)
salt and freshly ground black pepper
100g (4oz) traditional or creamy Lancashire cheese, crumbled or grated
75g (3oz) cherry tomatoes, halved
fresh herbs and salad leaves, to garnish

1. Put a large saucepan of water on to boil. Add half a teaspoon of salt, then the pasta. Cook it for about 8 - 10 minutes, or until tender, checking the pack instructions. Rinse with cold water and drain thoroughly

2. Heat the olive oil in a non-stick frying pan (suitable for placing under a grill, as you will need to later) and add the spring onions, courgette and pepper. Cook gently, stirring often, for about 6 - 8 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

3. Tip the pasta into the frying pan and mix with the vegetables.

4. Whisk the eggs and milk together, then add the herbs. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into the pan and scatter the cheese and cherry tomatoes evenly over the surface. Cook over a medium-low heat until the base has set.

5. Whilst the omelette is cooking on the hob, preheat a medium hot grill. Transfer the frying pan to the grill to cook and set the surface. Cool for a few minutes, then cut the omelette into wedges and serve, garnished with herbs and salad leaves.

Cook's tips: Substitute cold, cooked new potatoes for the pasta - you will need about 300g (10oz).

Lancashire cheese is excellent for cooking. Young Lancashire crumbles easily, so you don't have to grate it - and it melts quickly too. Even better - it tastes wonderful! For a change you could use Cheshire, Wensleydale or Caerphilly cheese for this omelette - all work equally well.

Spicy Chicken, Chick Pea & Cheddar Tortillas

Soft tortillas make a quick and easy meal when filled with a spicy chicken mixture - topped with melted Cheddar cheese.

Serves 4

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped, or 1 - 2 teaspoons chilli powder
4 tomatoes, chopped
1 x 400g can chick peas, rinsed and drained
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander or parsley
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 75g (6oz) mature Cheddar cheese
8 soft tortillas
salad leaves, to serve

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C / 375°F / Gas Mark 5.

2. Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the chicken. Cook over a high heat for a few minutes, stirring often, until browned. Add the onion, garlic and chilli or chilli powder and saute for 3 - 4 minutes. Reduce the heat and cook for another 5 - 6 minutes or so, until the chicken is cooked and tender.

3. Tip the tomatoes and chick peas into the frying pan and heat. Cook, stirring often, for 2 - 3 minutes. Add the coriander or parsley and season with salt and pepper.

4. Cut half the Cheddar into small cubes and grate the remainder.

5. Lay out all the tortillas on a work surface. Divide the chicken mixture between them, then add the cubes of cheese. Roll up and place in a lightly greased baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and bake for about 20 minutes until heated through and crispy. Serve at once with the salad leaves.

Cook's tips: You don't have to bake the tortillas if you prefer not to - just serve them as wraps, with soured fresh cream and guacamole.

Spicy Grilled Cod

Fish is so quick and simple to cook - and it's so good for us. Try it topped with a spicy cheese to give it a bit of a kick.

Serves 4

4 x 175-200g (6-7oz) thick cod fillets
olive oil, for basting
100g (4oz) Mexicana cheese (or use Cheddar with Herbs & Garlic)
mixed salad leaves, to serve

For the salsa:

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 pineapple rings in natural juice, finely chopped
2 tomatoes, finely chopped
1 small red or green chilli, finely chopped (optional)
5cm (2 inch) piece of cucumber, finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander or flat leaf parsley
1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Make the salsa by mixing all the ingredients together in a bowl, omitting the chilli if you'd rather not have it too spicy. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

2. Preheat the grill and line the grill pan with foil. Place the cod fillets on the grill rack and brush with a little olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Grill for about 5 - 6 minutes, or until the fish is cooked. To check that it is done, test with a fork - the flesh should be opaque and should flake easily.

3. Arrange the sliced cheese on top of the fish fillets and grill for a further 1 - 2 minutes until melted.

4 Serve-the fish with the salsa and the mixed salad leaves.

Cook's tips: You could use your favourite fish for this recipe - it doesn't have to be cod. Try sea bass, coley or skate wings. Just remember that the cooking time will depend on the thickness of the fish.

Try to avoid overcooking the cheese. If it's grilled for too long it will become tough and stringy.

For many more delicious cheesy recipes, please visit our website at www.britishcheese.com

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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