



Cheshire Cheese is thought to be Britain's oldest named cheese.

It was originally the generic name for cheese produced in the county of Cheshire and parts of surrounding counties.

The first cheese is believed to have been produced in Cheshire, by the Romans, in the garrison town of Chester. Cheshire Cheese is mentioned in the Domesday Book at the end of 11th Century.

Cheshire Cheese was traded across the country. The different varieties of Cheshire Cheese were aged to a sufficient level of hardness to withstand the rigours of transport (by horse and cart, and later by boat) to London for trading purposes. This trade started in the early 17th Century.

From 1739, Cheshire Cheese was the only cheese bought for consumption by the British Navy.

During the 19th century, sales of Cheshire Cheese grew strongly as it became a firm favourite in the industrial towns and cities of the midlands and north of England. Cheshire Cheese was a cheap form of protein and was sometimes referred to as the poor man's meat.

As the towns grew, milk produced on nearby farms was used for liquid consumption and the main Cheshire Cheese producing areas spread further out, to the south of Chester and towards the Shropshire borders.

Cheshire Cheese remains the UK's largest selling crumbly cheese with sales of around 6,000 tonnes per year.



Apple and Cheshire Cheese crumble

Despite the introduction of modern technology, the cheese making process is still similar to that used centuries ago.



STEP ONE

Whole cows milk is collected daily from farms, tested for quality, pasteurised then piped into large vats.



STEP TWO

To make the milk sour, special cultures called 'starters' are added to the vat.



STEP THREE

Once soured, vegetarian Rennet, which contains enzymes, is added to cause the milk to separate into curds and whey.



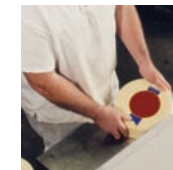
STEP FOUR

The curds are stirred and turned on special cheese tables making it easier to drain away the whey.



STEP FIVE

The curds are then salted by hand using local Cheshire salt. They are then milled into small pieces, put into moulds and wrapped in cheese cloth to help drain excess whey from the curd. They are then placed in large presses.



STEP SIX

After pressing the cheese has a crumbly texture. It is taken out of the moulds and the cheese cloth is removed. The cheese is vacuum packed in special bags, traditionally bound or waxed and then placed in store to mature for a matter of weeks or months depending on the maturity required. Expert graders check the cheese throughout the maturation process.

TASTE AND TEXTURE

Cheshire Cheese is sold at different ages and like all cheese, as it matures, its taste and texture will develop.

Young Cheshire is naturally bright and white in colour. It is a firm bodied cheese with a crumbly texture that breaks down gently in the mouth. It has a mild, milky taste and aroma, and is clean and fresh on the palette with a very slightly tangy finish.

A red vegetable dye – Annatto – is sometimes added to the milk to produce 'coloured' Cheshire, like Blue Cheshire Cheese. Despite the difference in colour the taste and texture of the cheese is the same as its white cousin.



As Cheshire matures so it becomes firmer in texture and slightly darker in colour. The flavours become more complex, but the cheese remains clean tasting, with no hint of bitterness. The crumbly texture remains but the cheese has a drier mouth feel.

Nutrition Information for Cheshire Cheese

| Typical values | per 30g serving | Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) Women | % of GDA supplied by 30g Women |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Energy | | | |
| Kcal (calories) | 114.3 | 2000 | 5.7 |
| Protein | 7.11 | 45 | 15.8 |
| Carbohydrate | 0.03 | 230 | 0 |
| of which sugars | 0.03 | 90 | 0 |
| Fat | 9.54 | 70 | 13.6 |
| of which saturated | 6.33 | 20 | 31.7 |
| Fibre | 0 | 24 | 0 |
| Sodium* | 0.15 | 2.4 | 6.3 |
| *Equivalent as salt | 0.375 | 6 | 6.3 |
| Calcium (milligrams) | 163.2 | 700 | 23.3 |

Suitable for lactose intolerant (30g of Cheshire contains virtually no lactose). GDAs for men are higher than those for women.

www.cheshirecheese.org

RECIPES AND SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Unlike many other cheese, the consistency of Cheshire Cheese is such that it does not break down completely when melted. It is the ideal cheese for grilling, baking and crumbling as well as for fillings and stuffings.

Eaten cold, the tangy flavour of Cheshire Cheese combines particularly well with fresh fruit, dried fruit and nuts.

Quick and easy serving suggestions:

Crumble onto salads – Cheshire Cheese has a much lower salt content than many other cheeses

Serve with fruit cake and an apple for a perfect lunch or tea time snack

Add to the fruit or the crumble to make the perfect apple crumble

Use Cheshire Cheese and mango chutney as the centrepiece of a ploughman's lunch

Crumble Cheshire over roasted Mediterranean vegetables for the last 15 minutes of cooking

Crumble Cheshire Cheese into a split cooked jacket potato and top with caramelized red onion rings and black pepper

For further recipe suggestions please visit www.cheshirecheese.org



www.cheshirecheese.org

WHERE TO BUY

Cheshire Cheese is available in all supermarkets as well as independent retailers throughout the UK.

The campaign for Cheshire Cheese is funded by British dairy farmers through the Milk Development Council and the three leading Cheshire Cheese makers - Belton Cheese Ltd, Joseph Heler Ltd and The Cheese Company Ltd. (Reece's Creamery).



"Please could you tell me", said Alice a little timidly,
"why your cat grins like that?"
"It's a Cheshire cat," said the Duchess "and that's why".

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

For more hints, tips and recipe suggestions visit
www.cheshirecheese.org

