



# U.S. Cheese



## More than Meets the Eye

As a buyer or an end-user of cheese, you are most likely looking for the best products or ingredients to set your business apart from the competition, and the United States might not be the first place that comes to mind for your every cheese need. We invite you to rethink U.S. cheese and discover what makes the United States the best-suited future source for global cheese supply.

### Great Milk Makes Great Cheese

With over 9.3 million cows, the United States produces 96.4 million metric tons of milk, making it the world's largest single-country producer of cow's milk.

In addition to ensuring superior comfort of their herds, U.S. dairy farmers feed their cows throughout the year with a rich and nutritious diet. This allows for a consistent and high quality milk which is in turn converted into hundreds of wholesome dairy products such as cheese.

### A Long-Standing Heritage

As a country of immigrants, many of our traditions reflect our ancestry, and one of those traditions is a love for cheese. Using Old World recipes and traditional methods, an industry was born with the first settlers. Today, the U.S. cheese industry is an international center of cheese making excellence and innovation. The United States offers hundreds of varieties and styles perfectly crafted to meet global customers and consumers' desire for enjoyable, great-tasting cheese. While cheese is essential and beloved in many of the world's favorite foods like pizza and cheeseburgers, it can also add a nice twist



DID  
YOU  
KNOW

- The United States is the world's largest cheese producer.
- Once a marginal player, the United States exported over 287,000 mt of cheese in 2016, making it one of the largest single country exporters of cheese in the world.
- U.S. dairy producers make over 600 varieties of cheese, including European-styles such as cheddar, parmesan and mozzarella and American Originals like monterey jack, colby and cream cheese.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture



on international dishes. The U.S. cheese industry is proud of its heritage and strives to continuously innovate to meet the growing needs of its customers.

## Innovations in Research and Technology

The U.S. cheese industry is well recognized for its advancements in cheese making research and technology. One example is the invention of IQF, or Individually Quick Frozen, mozzarella which locks in the freshness of the cheese and stops the aging process, providing foodservice and industrial users with a consistent, high-quality product.

Our industry is currently actively exploring innovative techniques to create reduced-sodium cheeses that meet high standards for taste, texture, moisture content and overall food safety.

## Award-Winning Cheese Production

U.S. cheese makers are proudly competing alongside their European counterparts in globally recognized cheese competitions and are consistently winning top honors. The United States won 92 medals at the 2016 World Cheese Awards and 247 at the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest, accounting for 75% of the total medal count.

### An Award-Winning Industry

**247**  
Medals

2016 World  
Championship  
Cheese Contest  
83 gold, 82 silver, 82 bronze

**92**  
Medals

2016 World  
Cheese Awards  
2 super gold, 11 gold, 32  
silver, 47 bronze





## Delivering Quality and Peace of Mind

## High Quality Standards

The United States has a long and enviable history of manufacturing safe cheese and dairy products. This is a responsibility that U.S. dairy farmers, dairy processors, as well as processing equipment manufacturers and ingredient suppliers working together with state and federal regulatory agencies have taken very seriously. The U.S. dairy industry is a highly regulated industry with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ensuring that U.S. cheeses meet some of the highest sanitation and quality standards in the world.

## A Key Global Cheese Supplier

Almost a quarter of the world's cheese — 5 million metric tons — is manufactured in the United States, and production continues to grow. Year-round cow's milk production guarantees product availability at any time of the year. With its state-of-the-art production facilities, the U.S. cheese industry has increased production by more than 1.1 million metric tons over the past decade.

In fact, because of the excellent value offered by the U.S. dairy industry, cheese exports have skyrocketed from just over 12 thousand metric tons in 1991, to over 368 thousand metric tons in 2014. While global market dynamics in 2015 have slowed down export growth, the United States remains nonetheless one of the top suppliers of cheese to the world.

For the past 15 years, sales of U.S. cheese to international customers have grown more than 672%. The U.S. cheese industry is equipped for today's fast-paced business, focused on the future and willing to serve overseas customers as their partner in trade.

While traditionally only part of the Western diet, over the past few decades cheese has become a more familiar food in the diet of many cultures not customarily consuming it. As global appetites for cheese continue to grow, the U.S. cheese industry is well suited to supply the increased demand.





## U.S. Cheese

### For Nutrition and Health

#### A Few Simple Ingredients

Natural cheese is made from only four ingredients: milk, salt, starter culture (good bacteria) and rennet (an enzyme). Since milk is the main ingredient, cheese contains many of the same nutrients — including calcium, protein, and phosphorus — found in milk. Salt is a vital part of the cheese making process, as it controls moisture, texture, taste and functionality, and also acts as a natural preservative to ensure food safety.

Processed cheese comes from natural cheese and contains the same important nutrients, including calcium, high-quality protein and phosphorus. It also can be fortified with extra calcium and vitamin D. The processing of cheese stops the aging process to maintain flavor and texture and create a versatile, tasty and easy-to-use food. Salt used in processed cheese provides firmness, flavor and boosts food safety with its natural preservation qualities.

#### Essential Nutrition for Health

People around the world enjoy cheese for the great taste and beneficial nutrients it provides. Cheese is an important source of dietary calcium for children and adults. Most cheeses act as a good to excellent source of calcium to meet daily calcium guidelines. The mineral calcium supports the development and maintenance of healthy teeth, bones and overall wellness, and the calcium in cheese is readily available and well-absorbed.

#### U.S. cheese adds the difference by

- Delivering supply security
- Building meaningful partnerships
- Accelerating customers'

An important source of calcium, cheese also contributes high-quality protein as well as phosphorus, vitamin A and zinc to the diet. Cheese is considered a nutrient-dense food because it provides a high concentration of nutrients relative to calorie content. While cheese also contains some sodium, fat and calories, dietary choices should include an assessment of a food's total nutrient package.

For people who find it difficult to digest the lactose found in milk and other dairy products, cheese is a particularly important nutrient source. Natural cheeses such as cheddar, colby, monterey jack, mozzarella and swiss contain minimal amounts of lactose. The cheese making process naturally removes lactose during the separation of cheese curds from the whey. ■



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#### Looking to buy cheese?

While USDEC does not manufacture or sell dairy products, we proudly support the people who do. Search the **U.S. Dairy Supplier Directory** at [ThinkUSAdairy.org](http://ThinkUSAdairy.org).

To learn more and find a USDEC representative near you, go to [ThinkUSAdairy.org/global-pres-](http://ThinkUSAdairy.org/global-pres-)



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