

COTTAGE CHEESE

Cottage cheese is a cheese curd product with a mild flavor. It is drained, so some whey (the liquid byproduct) remains and the individual curds remain loose. Cottage cheese is a fresh cheese, and therefore is not aged or ripened before it is packaged and sold to the public. The term "cottage cheese" is believed to have originated in American history because the simple cheese was usually made in cottages from any milk left over after making butter. However, the history of cottage cheese dates back to the Greeks and Egyptians.

Adding an acid to pasteurized skim milk, which causes a separation of the milk solids from the whey, makes cottage cheese. Adding lactobacillus –the same bacteria used to produce yogurt – which produces lactic acid or a food grade acid such as vinegar usually does this. After the curds are formed, it is cut into pieces for additional draining. Once the mixture is cut, the curds shrink and change shape as the whey drains from them. A process of heating and gentle rolling promotes the drainage of whey and smoothes the edges of individual curds. The curd size is the size of the "chunks" in the cottage cheese. The two major types of cottage cheese are small-curd, high-acid cheese made without rennet (an enzyme that coagulates milk), and large-curd, low-acid cheese made with rennet. Sometimes large-curd cottage cheese is called "chunk style." The final step is the addition of salt and cream after the curds are rinsed. Full fat cottage cheese has cream added until the overall fat content of the final product is 4 percent. Less cream is added when making reduced fat cottage cheese – usually enough to bring the total fat content to either 1 percent or 2 percent.

Cottage cheese is high in protein and is a good source of riboflavin. Although it contains calcium, much of it is lost in the separation of whey. Some cottage cheese products are fortified with calcium. To compensate for the flavor missing from the fat, low-fat and nonfat ones tend to have more sugar in them. Very low sodium varieties are also produced, and can be salted to taste.

Nutrient Content of Cottage Cheese (per 4-ounce serving)*							
	Calories	Milkfat (g)	Protein (g)	Carbohydrates (g)	Calcium (mg)	Riboflavin (mg)	Cholesterol (mg)
Creamed (4% fat)	117	5	14	3	68	0.18	17
Low-fat (2% fat)	101	2	15	4	77	0.21	9.5
Nonfat (dry curd)	96	0.5	19.5	2.1	36	0.16	8

*Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, <http://www.nal.gov/fnic/foodcomp>

Cottage cheese should be stored in its closed container in the refrigerator. All cottage cheese products are stamped with a "sell by" date. If any mold forms on the surface of the cottage cheese, discard it immediately.

A milk allergy is not the same thing as lactose intolerance. A food allergy is an abnormal response of the body's defense – the immune system – to an otherwise harmless food. Food intolerance is an adverse food-induced reaction that does not involve the body's immune system. Lactose intolerance is the inability to digest lactose, a sugar found in many dairy products. Lactose intolerance is rare in infants

and young children and is more common in adults. If you have a milk allergy, strict avoidance of milk is the only way to prevent a reaction. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires food manufacturers to list common food allergens on food labels in plain terms to make it easier to identify the food allergens. Food labels must clearly list eight allergens which account for almost 90 percent of all food allergies: cow's milk, soy, wheat, egg, peanut, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. Anyone allergic to milk should avoid the following ingredients and foods:

- Milk: in all forms, including condensed, dry, evaporated, and powdered milk, and milk from mammals (such as goat or sheep)
- Casein and casein hydrolysates
- Caseinates (such as sodium caseinate)
- Whey
- Lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate, lactoglobulin, lactoferrin and lactulose
- Butter: including butter, butter fat, butter oil, artificial butter flavor
- Buttermilk
- Cheese and cream cheese
- Cream, half & half, and ice cream
- Cottage cheese and curds
- Custard, pudding and yogurt
- Ghee
- Sour cream, sour milk