

COTTAGE CHEESE

Protein-Rich Ingredient On-Trend in Many Dishes



With its healthy attributes, cottage cheese is appearing on more menus and in recipes. Cottage cheese is part of the family of fresh, rindless cheeses not intended for ripening. It is a fresh, moist, slightly tangy cheese that features small, dense curds and has long been favored by chefs for adding creaminess and protein to side dishes such as fruits, salads and vegetables.

COTTAGE CHEESE FACTS



Cottage cheese is considered one of the first cheeses made in America. In the 18th century, settlers used milk leftovers from making butter to create a soft cheese in their small “cottage” homes.

Total production of cottage cheese in California in 2017 was 108.3 million pounds.



Cottage cheese is made by adding an acid, such as vinegar, or a lactic-acid bacterial culture to pasteurized milk, which separates the milk solids from the liquid whey. After the curd forms, cheesemakers gently cut it into pieces that allow additional whey to drain away. Finally, the curds are rinsed and salted.

Cottage cheese is a great source of protein, riboflavin, calcium and B vitamins.



Commercial cottage cheese is available in nonfat, low-fat (1% milkfat), and whole (4% milkfat) varieties.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store cottage cheese in a refrigerator set at 38°–40°F in the container in which it was sold.
- The “sell by” date stamped on cottage cheese products tells you how long the retail store can keep the product for sale on the shelf.
- If any mold forms on the surface of cottage cheese, discard it immediately.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Cottage cheese is gaining in popularity in kitchens as chefs look to expand their healthy offerings, differentiate dishes or reduce calories.

Cottage cheese is anything but plain, providing an interesting platform for savory and sweet creations. With its mild flavor and creamy texture, cottage cheese can be used in place of cream cheese or ricotta in dips, casseroles, pancakes and desserts. The unique curds can provide an interesting texture to pastry dough or can be blended to a smoother texture before adding to a recipe, such as classic Coeur à la Crème.

Chefs also add cottage cheese to blue cheese dressing to create a chunky texture at a lower cost and with fewer calories.

Front-of-the-House

A recent California Milk Advisory Board consumer survey found that 71% of Americans have a favorable sentiment about cottage cheese, something operators should consider as an easy substitution for sour cream, high-protein addition to avocado toast or mixed with fruit and blended into dipping sauces.

WHAT'S TRENDING

Grocery stores have been moving cottage cheese away from sour cream and positioning it with yogurt; chefs are making similar changes substituting cottage cheese for sour cream to highlight the added protein, reduced fat and lower calories in dishes. To replace sour cream in recipes, blend one cup of cottage cheese with 4 tablespoons of milk and 2 teaspoons of lemon juice.

Cottage cheese is also making an appearance in the “grab-and-go” category as a snack with extra ingredients including crackers with tomato chutney or caramelized onions, as well as nuts and dried fruit.



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