



A cooking and nutrition Fact Sheet

August 2010

Say Cheese!

Buying Cheese

- Cheese is a nutrient dense food. Cheese provides protein, vitamins and minerals, especially calcium.
- A serving size of cheese to equal 1 cup of milk: 1½ ounces
- Remember to compare the cost per pound or ounce.
- Aged or sharp cheeses often cost more than soft or mild.
- Sliced or grated cheese usually costs more than blocks.
- Processed cheeses (including American cheese) may cost less than natural cheese, but have added salt and oil.
- Buy only what you can use. Do not buy cheese unless you can use it **before** the freshness date on the package.

Storing Cheese

- Keep unopened cheese in the refrigerator and in the packing it comes in until ready to use.
- After using, wrap cheese tightly as air causes it to dry out and grow mold. If mold occurs on hard cheese, cut away the mold plus one inch and throw away.
- Cheese can be frozen, however, it can dry out. Frozen grated cheese works best for baked dishes like a casserole or lasagne. There is no need to defrost it, just add it to the dish.

Other Ideas for Cheese

- Spread grated cheese on baked potatoes or other vegetables.
- Add a slice of cheese to your sandwich.
- Top chili or soup with grated cheese.
- Make tacos or burritos and top with cheese.
- Make a cheese omelet.
- Add grated cheese to biscuit dough before baking.
- Add grated cheese to scrambled eggs.
- Add a slice of cheese to an English muffin for a quick breakfast.
- Make a quick lunch of cheese and refried beans on a tortilla.

Cooking with Cheese

Cook cheese on low heat as high heat causes it to become rubbery and/or stringy.

Bean Salad

- 1 16-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 1 16-ounce can peas, drained, or 2 cups frozen peas
- 1 cup ½-inch cubes of cheese
- 1 pickle diced, or 2 tablespoons pickle relish
- ½ cup low fat mayonnaise

1. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Chill and serve.

Potato Plus Soup

Yield: 6 servings

- 2 cups water
- 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon
- 4 cups skim milk
- 1 teaspoon crumbled dried parsley flakes
- 1 cup potato flakes
- 3 cups fresh or frozen cauliflower or broccoli pieces or a combination
- 1 Tablespoon water
- ½ cup shredded cheese

1. Combine water, bouillon, milk and parsley. Heat to simmer.
2. Microwave cauliflower or broccoli in a covered dish with 1 Tablespoon of water until vegetables are tender.
3. Add potato flakes to simmering liquid. Stir in cauliflower, broccoli, and cheese.
4. Heat until cheese is melted. Serve.

Taco Rice Skillet

Yield: 8 servings

- 1½ pounds ground meat
- 1½ cups uncooked rice
- 4 cups water
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 to 4 teaspoons chili powder
- 3 cups chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 3 cups shredded cheese
- 1½ cups shredded lettuce

1. Brown ground meat in a large skillet. Drain fat. Return meat to pan.
2. Add rice, water, onion, chili powder and tomatoes to skillet. Simmer over low heat until rice is cooked, about 25 minutes.
3. Portion meat/rice mixture onto plates. Sprinkle cheese. Place lettuce over top. Serve with taco sauce, if desired.

☆Tip

- Reduce cheese to 2 cups for a lighter meal.

Macaroni and Cheese

Yield: 6 servings

- 2 cups thin white sauce☆
- 2 cups elbow macaroni (7 ounces)
- 2 Tablespoons chopped onion
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups (¾ pound) shredded cheese (using a sharp cheese will give a stronger, “cheesy” flavor)

1. Prepare white sauce recipe below and set aside.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a 2 quart casserole dish.
3. Cook macaroni in boiling salted water for 9 minutes. Drain.
4. Place half the macaroni in a 2 quart casserole dish. Sprinkle with half onion, cheese, and seasonings. Repeat.
5. Pour white sauce over top. Cover. Bake 30 minutes covered. Uncover. Bake 15 minutes longer.

☆White Sauce:

- 2 Tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk

1. Melt butter or margarine in skillet over medium heat.
2. Add flour and continue cooking and stirring for 2 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 cup milk and continue to stir until sauce starts to thicken.

Contact Us

Visit www.msuextension.org/nep
for more information.