

Did you  
*know?*

About **one-third** of all milk produced in the United States goes to cheese making.



The average American eats about **35 pounds** of cheese each year. If you break it down per day, it's just about **1.5 ounces**, fitting well within the Dietary Guidelines recommendations for daily dairy consumption.

The most popular cheese recipe in the United States is **macaroni and cheese**.



**Natural cheese** is made from **four** basic ingredients: milk, salt, "good bacteria" and the enzyme rennet. From there, cheesemakers can adjust the basic recipe to make all of the **cheeses we know and love**.



Life is better with  
*Cheese*



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# How to host a cheese tasting

(and what to pair your cheeses with)



## A cheese tasting party doesn't have to be intimidating.

And forget formal. Invite some friends and use it as an excuse to try new cheese varieties while revisiting those old favorites. Consider the following when planning your tasting.

## Decide on a Theme.

Perhaps you want to serve all cow's milk cheeses, or cheeses specifically produced in your state or locality. Or you want to focus on a particular flavor of cheese – say cheddar – but serve different varieties of that flavor. If pairing is your jam, perhaps you want to choose a handful of cheeses and serve them paired with mini tasters of wines or beers.

## Choose your Cheeses Wisely.

Depending on your “theme,” you will want to carefully select a variety of cheeses with varying flavors (mild to strong), color hues, and textures (smooth to crumbly), keeping in mind your guest list. Choose a few “safe bet” cheeses with mild flavors, and choose one “daring” cheese with bold new flavors – something that your guests likely haven't tried before.



## Consider the Amount.

A good rule of thumb is 1 to 1 ½ ounces of cheese per person if the tasting is the appetizer course and a larger meal is to follow. If the cheese tasting is the “meal,” consider upwards of 6 ounces of cheese per person.

## Display like a Pro.

Serve your cheeses on wood cutting boards, marble or granite slabs or tiles, serving trays or small mirrors. Make available appropriate serving utensils – such as toothpicks, tongs, cheese knives, butter knives (for spreadable cheeses), etc. Consider buying larger pieces of cheese that guests can cut from while also cutting some of the cheeses into bite-sized pieces of varying shapes – the contrast makes for a nice display. Don't forget simple signs identifying the cheeses for your guests.

Complement your cheeses by serving them alongside a variety of fresh fruits (grapes, apples and pears pair well), dried fruits (try dried apricots or cherries), nuts, crackers, sliced meats, olives, pickles, fresh fruit preserves and French baguette slices. Cheese is best served at room temperature – allow the cheeses to sit out for 20 minutes to 1 hour prior to guests arriving, depending on the sizes and textures of your cheeses.

## Dare to Pair.

Complement the rich, smooth and nutty flavor of a mild cheddar with a Sauvignon Blanc, a pilsner or a wheat beer. If your choice is a buttery Gouda, balance it with a Syrah/Shiraz, a pale lager or a nut brown ale. Try a Riesling, hard cider or porter to bring out the flavors of a Gorgonzola cheese. For more ideas on pairings, visit [EatWisconsinCheese.com](http://EatWisconsinCheese.com).

