

# HOME ECONOMICS

# GUIDE



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## Using and Storing Cheddar Cheese

Karla Hughes, State Food and Nutrition Specialist  
Barbara Willenberg, Extension Assistant

Cheddar cheese is a semihard cheese that has a firm texture and ranges in color from white to orange. It is considered to be a *natural* cheese, which means that it is prepared and allowed to age or "ripen" to develop the flavor. Cheddar cheese can be mild, medium or sharp in flavor, depending on the amount of time it is allowed to age. The longer Cheddar cheese is aged, the more crumbly it becomes and the better it is for cooking because it does not become as stringy when heated. Cheddar cheese is sometimes called American or Longhorn cheese.

Cheddar cheese is different from process cheese. Process cheese is made by blending aged natural cheese, such as Cheddar, with fresh cheese. The mixture is heated (pasteurized) to prevent further ripening.

### How to Store Cheddar Cheese

Most people cannot use large amounts of Cheddar cheese before it begins to mold or taste old. To get the most food value from your Cheddar cheese, store it right.

1. Open the 5-pound block of cheese.
2. If the surface is moldy, scraping it off **does not** make it safe. While some molds are not harmful on cheese, there are types of mold that produce a toxin (a type of poison) that may cause serious health problems. Even if mold growth is just starting to appear, the amount of growth **below** the surface could be enough to be dangerous. Cheese showing mold growth should be discarded or returned to the distributor.

No one should ever sniff mold because of the possibility of sending mold spores into the respiratory tract and perhaps causing

serious illness. This is especially important for individuals who are allergic to mold because it could cause a severe reaction.

3. If the cheese is **not** moldy, cut the 5-pound block into smaller blocks. A good sized block would be the amount you think you can use in one week. Cheddar cheese can be grated before wrapping for storage. This makes the cheese more convenient to use when cooking.
4. Cheddar cheese can be frozen for a short period of time - 6 weeks in the freezer at 0°F., or not more than 3 weeks in the freezer compartment of your refrigerator. It is important to use packaging materials made for freezing food to ensure the cheese will be of acceptable quality when thawed.

### Use these guidelines for freezing cheese:

- Blocks should be one pound or less and no more than one-inch thick. If Cheddar cheese is grated before freezing, divide the cheese into one or two cup portions for storage. These amounts will be easier to use once cheese is thawed.
  - Package blocks of Cheddar cheese for freezing in one of the following:
    - 1) heavy-duty aluminum foil
    - 2) plastic-coated freezer paper with freezer tape
    - 3) freezer bags
  - Package shredded Cheddar cheese for freezing in freezer bags or rigid freezer containers.
  - Thaw cheese in the refrigerator.
5. If there is no freezer space available, Cheddar cheese can be stored in the refrigerator at 40°F. or below for 1 to 2 months if it is still in the original wrapper, or 3 to 4 weeks if the original package of the cheese has been opened. If the Cheddar cheese has been

removed from the freezer and thawed in the refrigerator, it should be used as soon as possible.

The biggest disadvantage of freezing Cheddar cheese is that it will dry out and become crumbly upon thawing. Therefore, it should be used in cooking for best results.

## Cheddar Cheese is Good For You

Cheddar cheese is a good source of calcium and protein. It also contains fat, riboflavin and small amounts of other nutrients such as vitamins A, B<sub>6</sub>, and B<sub>12</sub>. Remember, natural Cheddar cheese contains about half as much sodium (salt) and phosphorus as process American cheese, but slightly more calories, fat, protein and calcium.

## Cooking With Cheddar Cheese

- Use low temperatures. High temperatures for long periods cause cheese to toughen and cause fat to separate out.

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### Cheesy-Tomato Pie

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1½ cups chopped onion
- 1½ cups milk
- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup biscuit mix\*
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- 1½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown beef and onion; drain well. Spread in a greased 10-inch pie plate. Combine milk, eggs, biscuit mix, salt and pepper, beat for 1 minute with a hand beater. Pour over ground beef. Bake for 25 minutes at 400°F. Top with tomato slices and cheese. Bake 5 to 8 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Makes: 6 to 8 servings.

\*Use Missouri Mix (*Home Economics Guide Sheet 1055*) or any commercial biscuit mix.

### Tuna and Cheddar Casserole

- 2 quarts of water
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup macaroni
- 1 can chunk tuna, drained
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can peas, drained
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 2 tomatoes, sliced (optional)

- Cheese will melt faster and easier if grated or cut into small pieces.
- Thoroughly chilled cheese is easier to slice and grate.
- One pound of cheese makes about four cups of grated cheese.

## Use Cheddar Cheese in Meals

Cheddar cheese is easy to use.

- Slice it for sandwiches or hamburgers.
- Make cheese toast for breakfast.
- Grate it for use in salads, cooked vegetables, casseroles and scrambled eggs, or on top of soups and tacos.
- Add to biscuit or pie dough, or place a slice inside hot biscuits or on top of hot apple pie.
- Eat it with fruit or crackers as a snack or dessert.
- Or, use it in one of the following recipes.

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Grease casserole dish. Cook macaroni in boiling water until tender; drain. Combine macaroni, tuna, mushroom soup, peas and garlic salt in a large bowl. Pour into casserole dish and top with sliced tomatoes and grated Cheddar. Heat at 350°F. for 20 to 30 minutes, or until hot. Makes: 6 to 8 servings.

### Apple 'N Cheese Oatmeal Drops

- ¾ cup flour
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1½ cups quick-cooking oats
- ¾ cup raisins
- ⅔ cup margarine, softened
- ⅓ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 egg
- 1 cup finely chopped apples

Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine flour, cinnamon, baking powder and salt; set aside. Combine shredded cheese, oats and raisins; set aside. Cream margarine, sugar and egg until well blended. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture, mixing well. Stir in cheese mixture. Add apples and mix well. Drop by teaspoons 2 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Makes: 2 dozen cookies.