

Cheese Comparison

Directions What qualities do different cheeses have? Read the following information. Then conduct the experiment and analyze the results to learn more about cheeses.

Many Americans eat more than 20 pounds of cheese every year. Cheese is a convenient snack food and is often combined with other favorite foods. Many cheeses, however, have as much or more fat than prime red meat. In hard cheeses, such as cheddar, colby, and Swiss, 70 to 80 percent of the calories come from fat. A serving of steak contains 50 to 60 percent of calories from fat. Two slices of American cheese contain about as much fat as a fast-food hamburger.

When you compare foods in the MyPyramid Milk Group, you notice that 8 ounces of milk or yogurt is equal to 1½ ounces of ripened cheese. Cheese is a concentrated source of fat. By the same token, cheese is a concentrated source of nutrients in the Milk Group—calcium, protein, phosphorus, and vitamins A and D.

Cheeses vary in their fat content. Knowing more about cheese can help you make healthful choices. There are two basic classifications of cheese. Natural cheese, such as Swiss, is made directly from milk. Processed cheese is a combination of natural cheeses and other ingredients. Natural cheeses tend to be the highest in fat content. Using low-fat cheese helps to lower the fat, but these cheeses still contain a significant amount of fat. In general, processed cheeses are also high-fat products compared with foods in other food groups, such as grains, fruits, and vegetables.

To limit the fat from cheese in your eating plan, follow these tips:

- Choose products that contain no more than two or three grams of fat per ounce.
- Use shredded cheese instead of slices and reduce the amount used.

Experiment: Comparing Cheeses

1. Choose three different types of cheese, each available in both regular and low-fat varieties. Obtain 1½-inch cubes of each. Write the name of each cheese in the chart on the next page.
2. Find the fat content for each cheese and enter that in the chart.
3. Cut off ½ inch of each cheese and use that to compare the cheeses in flavor and texture. Is the flavor pleasing? Is the texture desirable? Enter information in the chart.

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Focus on Science

4. Determine ease of melting. Use the remaining 1-inch cube of each cheese. Place each cube separately on a plate and microwave on high for 30 seconds. Repeat this procedure until the cheese melts. In the chart write the length of time it takes to melt each cheese.

Type of Cheese	Grams of Fat per Ounce	Flavor	Texture	Ease of Melting
A.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular				
<input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat				
B.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular				
<input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat				
C.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular				
<input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat				

5. Which cheese would you recommend to people who want to lower the amount of fat in their eating plan? Why?

6. How do the regular and low-fat cheeses compare in flavor and texture? Which do you think are the most and the least desirable?

7. Based on ease of melting, which cheese would be best for cooking? Why?
