



# YOGURT AND CHEESE

Cafeteria Connection

## Tell Me about Yogurt and Cheese

Yogurt is packed with nutrients that help support strong bones, healthy blood pressure, and a strong immune system. It also contains beneficial bacteria that help with digestion.

Cheese is made from just four simple ingredients: milk, salt, a starter culture, and sometimes rennet. With these ingredients, cheese can be made at home. Cheese-making kits make it easy to get started!

## Crediting Information: Yogurt

- Yogurt (commercially prepared) is a protein food that credits toward the Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) meal pattern component.
- 4 fluid ounces, or 1/2 cup, yogurt credits as 1 oz eq MMA.
- MMA is measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq). An oz eq of MMA is the amount of food representing the same nutritional content as 1 ounce of edible portion of lean meat without the bone.
- Yogurt (commercially prepared) can be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened. In school meals, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Please check program-specific requirements with your specialist.
- Yogurt is the only creditable MMA allowed in a smoothie. Smoothies can be prepared in-house or commercially (Product Formulation Statement required for meal pattern validation).

## Crediting Information: Cheese

- Cheese is a protein food that credits toward the Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) meal pattern component.
- One ounce of natural or processed cheese and cheese substitutes such as: American, Cheddar, Mozzarella, Provolone, Swiss, Feta, Brie, Parmesan, Romano credit as 1 oz eq MMA. For example, 1 oz Mozzarella Cheese Stick credits as 1 oz eq MMA.
- Two ounces or 1/4 cup Cottage cheese or Ricotta cheese credits as 1 oz eq MMA.
- Two ounces cheese food, cheese food substitutes, or cheese spread credits as 1 oz eq MMA. For example, 2 oz Boursin Garlic & Fine Herb cheese spread credits as 1 oz eq MMA.
- Note: cream cheese is not considered a cheese spread in the USDA food buying guide and does NOT credit toward the MMA component.
- MMA is measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq).

## Nutrition Facts

Yogurt provides nine essential nutrients: protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin B12, zinc, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, selenium, and iodine. It also contains probiotics, which are live microorganisms that support healthy digestion.

Cheese provides eight essential nutrients: protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamin B12, niacin, riboflavin, selenium, and iodine. It is a particularly good source of protein, which is essential for muscle repair and growth.





## Selection and Storage

- Yogurt and cheese should be kept refrigerated.
- Adhere to 'best by' dates for best quality.
- Yogurt can develop a layer of liquid on top. This is whey, a protein-rich liquid that naturally separates during storage and can be mixed back into the yogurt before serving.
- Make sure cheese is sealed well to keep out air and moisture.
- You can freeze cheese; the texture becomes crumblier and works well in casseroles, soups, and dips.

## Recipes

- [Arroz Con Queso \(Rice with Cheese\) USDA Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Seasonal Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits USDA Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Cheesy Bean Tostada USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Cheesy Cheddar Yogurt Drop Biscuits – USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Rice Vegetable Casserole USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)
- [Strawberry Smoothie Bowl USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)

## Sourcing

- [Find cheese](#)
- [Find yogurt](#)



## Culinary Tips

- Yogurt can be used in place of mayonnaise or sour cream to add tangy creaminess and nutrients.
- Yogurt can be used in baked goods to add moisture and fluffiness.
- Yogurt can add creaminess to soups. Avoid curdling by tempering yogurt before adding to the soup. Temper yogurt by adding a small amount of hot soup to the yogurt and stir to combine.
- A few popular varieties of cheese that are made locally in Washington State include:
  - Cheddar: A firm cheese with a rich, sharp flavor.
  - Mozzarella: A soft cheese known for its stretchiness, perfect for pizzas.
  - Blue Cheese: A strong-flavored cheese with blue veins.
  - Brie: A soft, creamy cheese with a mild, buttery flavor.
  - Parmesan: A hard, granular cheese often used for grating.
  - Cottage Cheese: A soft and mild cheese made from milk curds.
- When melting cheese, use gentle heat to prevent it from becoming greasy or stringy.
- Hard cheese rinds, like parmesan can be used add flavor to soups and sauces.
- Cheese is easier to grate when it's cold.