



Cheese

Cheese Glossary

A

Acidulous: A clean, pleasant taste describing the slight tanginess of a curd or fresh cheese.

Aged: Cheese that has been aged over 10 months to 1 year.

Aging: All the steps that go in ripening a cheese. Temperature, humidity and storage time all play a role.

Ammoniacal: An unpleasant odour emitted by a cheese that's past its prime, particularly by soft cheeses.

Annato: is a natural orange coloring used in making orange cheddar.

Artisanal¹: The milk is processed off the farm premises and uses milk produced from one or several farms using several methods for the manual manufacturing of cheeses.

B

Best before date: Inscription on the package identifying the date when the cheese, properly stored, will be at its best.

Butterfat: Also known as milk fat (MF), this is the fatty portion of milk.

Bloomy rind: A white, velvety ring usually found on soft cheeses. It's produced by spraying the cheese surface with penicillium.

Blue veined: Cheese that's been treated with penicillium and perforated with needles which allow air to enter the body and promote the growth of blue mould. Canadian Ermite and Bénédictin are blue-veined.

Brine: A solution of salt water in which some cheeses are stored.

C

Coagulation: What happens when milk solidifies and curds form.

Cold pack: A cheese made from a blend of similar cheeses, usually Old Cheddar, achieved without any heating process or emulsifiers.

Cooked: A step in the making of hard cheese, during which the curd is heated to reduce the amount of moisture (whey)

Cross-contamination: Mixing of flavours and aromas from one cheese to another by cutting on the same knife

without properly cleaning utensils and cutting surfaces each time. This can also occur when a very pungent or strong cheese is placed next to a mild cheese.

Curd: The solids formed during coagulation, in the early stages of cheese making. Curds are subsequently pressed and aged or enjoyed as is.

Curdling: The preliminary stage of cheesemaking in which the solids (curds) are separated from the liquids (whey).

Cutting: The act of slicing curd to eliminate more whey.

D

Draining: The process by which whey is drained from the milk solids, just before pressing.

Double cream: A bloomy rind cheese with a milk fat content from 30% to 35% and a moisture of 50%.

E

Enzyme: A substance used to promote the curdling of milk i.e. rennet, pepsin, microbial.

"Eyes" or Openings: Holes and other openings in the cheese produced by pockets of gas which are released by bacterial action. Canadian Swiss cheese is a good example.

Extra aged: Cheese that has been aged over 2 to 7 years but not designated by year.

F

Farmstead¹: The milk is processed at the farm and uses only the milk produced on the farm.

Ferment: A mixture of lactic acid bacteria that has the ability to convert lactose into lactic acid and that contributes to the development of flavour.

Fermentation: The process that occurs during the ripening process and that affects the final character of the cheese.

Firm: A category of interior-ripened cheeses that are characterized by a low moisture content and an extensive range of flavours that become more pronounced with age.

Flavoured : Cheese that has particulates or flavouring added. Examples are Havarti, Monterey Jack, Feta, Cheddar and Cream Cheese.

Fresh: A category of cheeses that have not undergone a ripening process and depend on lactic curdling for their delicate, tangy flavour and moist texture.

H

Hard: A category of Canadian interior-ripened cheeses that are cooked to remove as much moisture as possible and have a lengthy aging process, which accounts for their sharp, complex aromas and flavours.

I

Industrial¹: The milk is processed using manufacturing methods that are highly mechanical and automated. The milk comes from several farms.

Interior-ripened: Describes a cheese in which ripening occurs evenly throughout the entire body of the cheese.

L

Lactose: The sugar that naturally occurs in milk. Since ripening removes most of the lactose, fresh cheeses contain higher amounts, while firm and hard cheeses have just traces.

Lactose-free: Cheeses that are designated as having no lactose (milk sugar).

Lactoserum: Liquid residue from milk after the removal of cheese curds in the manufacture of cheese.

Light cheese: Cheese that has a 25% or more reduction in butterfat content as compared to its "normal" counterpart.

M

Marbled: A cheese made with orange and white curds pressed together.

Medium: Cheese that has been aged over to 4 to 9 months.

Mixed rind: Refers to a blend of moulds or bacteria or other elements that a producer can use to provide a different rind structure for flavour and aroma.

Moisture: The amount of liquid remaining in the cheese. Expressed as a percentage.

M.F.: Milk fat content.

N

Nutty: A cheese with the flavour or aroma of fresh hazelnuts or almonds that occurs from the cultures used in specific cheeses.

O

Organic milk: Milk that comes from a certified organic operation.

P

Pasta filata: Italian term for cheeses made with curd that is heated in hot whey and mechanically stretched before being pressed into moulds. The resulting cheeses are more elastic. Examples are Fior di Latte, Caciocavallo, Mozzarella and Bocconcini.

Pasteurized milk¹: Milk has been pasteurized by being held at a temperature of not less than 61.6°C for a period of not less than 30 minutes, or for a time and a temperature that is equivalent thereto in phosphatase destruction, as determined by official methods *MFO-3, Determination of Phosphatase Activity in Dairy Products*, November 30, 1981 (i.e. 72°C for 15 seconds).

Pasteurization: The process by which milk is heated to high temperatures to destroy certain bacteria. Most Canadian cheeses are made with pasteurized milk.

Penicillium: The family of moulds that are cultured on the surface of soft cheeses to produce "bloomy" rinds, characteristic of Brie and Camembert, and internally to produce blue-veined cheeses such as Ermite and Bénédictin.

Penicillium Candidum: A fungus used in the production of Brie and Camembert. It grows on the cheese surface

forming a filamentous, a felt- like covering, and releases enzymes to flavour and ripen the cheese.

Penicillium Glaucum: A fungus that is used to cause Blue Cheese to develop mould. Ex: Borgonzola style cheese. It is milder than Penicillium Roqueforti. Stilton cheese uses half of this fungus and half of penicillium Roqueforti.

Penicillium Roqueforti: A fungus that is added to curds before pressing and activated by “needling” the cheese with a device that punches small holes, which allow the mould spores to grow vegetative cells and spread within the cheese. Ex: Roquefort style cheeses. Stilton cheese uses half of this fungus and half of Penicillium Glaucum.

Piquant: A cheese that is pleasantly sharp and has a stimulating flavour or aroma.

Pressed: Describes a cheese whose whey was not drained naturally but eliminated in a mechanical pressing process.

Pressing: A step in cheese making that, through various degrees of pressure, shapes the cheese.

Processed: Describes a cheese made from a blend of similar cheeses, such as various Cheddars, which have been heated and melted together.

Pronounced: A term used to describe the main characteristic of a cheese that has a very distinct, strong flavour or aroma.

Pungent: A term used to describe a cheese that is sharp or biting in taste or aroma.

R

Raw Milk¹: Milk that has not been pasteurized or milk has not undergone a thermalized treatment above 40°C. Cheeses made from this kind of milk are held for 60 days before being released to the public.

Resilient: Describes the texture of a cheese that springs back when compressed or stretched.

Rind: The protective external layer of a cheese. Rinds can be naturally or artificially created, and either washed or brushed.

Ripened: Describes a cheese whose body has softened throughout and whose flavour has developed distinctive qualities.

Ripening: The process and methods by which cheese mature and develop distinctive qualities. Length of time, temperature and humidity are determining factors. Ripening can start from the surface (Camembert), the interior (Cheddar), or both.

Ripening room: A place where the cheese is allowed to ripen.

S

Salting: A step, prior to or following pressing, where cheese is dry-salted or immersed in brine.

Semi-soft: A category that includes a wide variety of unripened, surface-ripened and interior-ripened cheeses of medium firmness and moisture content.

Shelf life: The length of time a cheese will be at its best for flavour, texture and aroma.

Smoked: Cheese that can be naturally smoked or smoke flavoured.

Soft Cheese: A category of surface-ripened cheeses that have not been pressed or cooked and have edible white bloomy rinds that are produced by spraying the surface with a penicillium culture.

Stabilizers: Cheese processors can use gar or gar gum which is the endosperm of guar beans. The stabilizer helps prevents solids from settling.

Stretched: Describes a treatment in which the curd of a cheese is heated, kneaded and pulled in hot whey prior to shaping. (see Pasta filata)

Surface-ripened: Describes a cheese in which ripening begins on the surface of the cheese and progresses to the interior.

T

Tangy: A term used to describe a cheese that has a sharp, slightly acidulous flavour.

Thermalized¹: Milk has undergone a short and advanced thermal treatment at a temperature of 59°C to 65°C for a period of 15 to 20 seconds. This procedure eliminates, in part, certain bacteria susceptible to causing an infection and impoverishing the lactic flora. Cheeses made from this kind of milk are held for 60 days before being released to the public.

Triple cream: A bloomy rind cheese with a milk fat content from 30%to 35% and a moisture of 50%.

U

Unripened: Cheese that is cut, packaged and distributed for sale after draining. Bocconcini is an unripened cheese.

V

Vacuum packing: A method of packaging where cheese is placed in a plastic envelope, the air is removed and the package is sealed. This prevents the cheese from drying out and restricts mould growth.

W

Washed rind: Refers to the process by which the rinds of certain cheeses are washed periodically during ripening, resulting in the coppery or beige colour of Mamirolle and Oka.

Whey: The liquid that separates from solids when milk coagulates. Whey contains lactose and mineral salts.

Source:

1. *The [Canadian Dairy Information Centre \(CDIC\)](#)*