

American cheese

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

American cheese is a type of processed cheese. It can be orange, yellow, or white in color, is mild, salty, and faintly sweet in flavor, has a medium-firm consistency, and has a very low melting point.

Very early in its history, American cheese was only white in color—as it was made from a blend of cheeses (most often including cheddar cheese) which were originally only white. However, the later versions are often a yellow hue due to the addition of annatto, a sweet and nutty seasoning added to cheddar and to Colby so that by the late 1800s American cheese was often simply called "yellow cheese."

Today's American cheese is, by law, required to be manufactured from at least two types of cheese. Because its manufacturing process differs from

"unprocessed"/raw/natural cheeses,^[1] American cheese can not be legally sold under the name (authentic) "cheese" in the US. Instead, federal (and even some state) laws mandate that it be labeled as "processed cheese" if simply made from combining more than one cheese,^[2] or "cheese food" if dairy ingredients such as cream, milk, skim milk, buttermilk, cheese whey, or albumin from cheese whey are added.^[3] As a result, sometimes even the *word* "cheese" is absent altogether from the product's labeling in favor of, e.g., "American slices" or "American singles". In the United Kingdom, packs of individually wrapped slices are labeled as "singles",^[4] although they are commonly referred to as "cheese slices".

The marketing term, "American Cheese", for processed cheese—combined with the ubiquitous prevalence of processed cheeses in the US, versus outside it—has led to the terms *American cheese* and "processed cheese" being used interchangeably in America. However, the term "American cheese" has a legal definition as a type of pasteurized processed cheese under the American Code of Federal Regulations.^[5]



Wrapped slices of American cheese

Contents

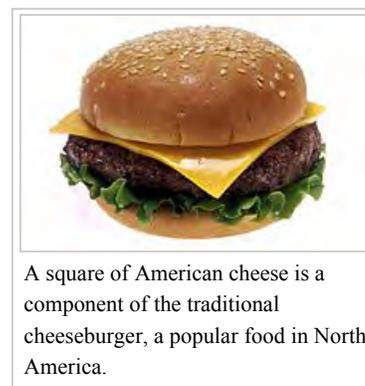
- 1 History
 - 1.1 Origins
- 2 Modern varieties
- 3 See also
- 4 Notes
- 5 External links

History

Origins

British colonists made cheddar cheese soon upon their arrival in North America. By 1790, American cheddars were being exported back to England. According to Robert Carlton Brown, author of *The Complete Book of Cheese*, "The English called our imitation Yankee, or American, Cheddar, while here at home it was popularly known as yellow or store cheese".^[6] In 1878, the total export of American cheese was 355 million pounds per year, with an expected growth to 1,420 million pounds.^[7]

After the official invention of processed cheese in 1911, and its subsequent popularization by James L. Kraft in the late-1910s and the 1920s, the term "American cheese" rapidly began to refer to *this* variety, instead of the traditional but more expensive cheddars also made and sold in the US. The latter had already begun to be produced on an industrial scale in the 1890s, leading to the term "factory cheese".



A square of American cheese is a component of the traditional cheeseburger, a popular food in North America.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines American cheese as a "cheese of cheddar type, made in the U.S." and lists 1804 as the first known usage of "American cheese", occurring in the Frankfort, Kentucky newspaper *Guardian of Freedom*. The next usage given is in 1860 by Charles Dickens in his series *The Noncommercial Traversal*.^[8]

The English method of producing cheddar cheese was known in America as "the Joseph Harding Method".^{[9][10]}

Modern varieties

Even though the term "American cheese" has a legal definition in the United States as a type of pasteurized processed cheese, products called "American cheese" are by no means identical. Depending on the additives and the amounts of milk fat, oil, and water added during emulsification, the taste and texture of solid American cheese varies. As a result, some varieties (e.g. "American cheese" and "American processed cheese") bear remarkable similarity to traditional/unprocessed cheeses, while other varieties (e.g. "American cheese food" and "American cheese product") are much more like Velveeta or Cheez Whiz.

The taste and texture of different varieties of American cheese vary considerably, and mostly depend on the percentage of cheese-versus-additives used during emulsification. Varieties with lower percentages of additives tend to taste more like traditional cheeses. Depending on the food manufacturer, the color of the cheese (orange, yellow, or white) may indicate different ingredients or processes. Typically, yellow to orange American cheese is made with cheeses (such as Cheddar or Colby cheese) that are seasoned with annatto, while white American cheese is made with cheeses (such as White Cheddar or Jack cheese) which do not contain annatto.

The processed variety of American cheese is sold in three basic packaging varieties: individually-wrapped cheese slices (which are not sliced from a block of cheese, but rather slabs of processed cheese which are formed from a viscous processed cheese which only solidifies between the wrapping medium); small, pre-sliced blocks of 8 to 36 slices; and large blocks meant for use behind deli counters. The individually-wrapped cheese slices are, typically, the least like traditional cheese. Small blocks of pre-sliced (e.g., 8-36 slices), unwrapped American cheese are also marketed, often with the branding "deluxe" or "old-fashioned"; this variety of American cheese is similar in ingredients and texture to that of modern block American cheese. Before the advent of the individually-wrapped variety, this was the typical variety that Americans purchased. Hence, some people refer to this as "classic" or "traditional" American cheese.

See also

- List of cheeses
- List of dairy products
- Government cheese
- Kraft Singles
- Velveeta
- Cheez Whiz
- Easy Cheese

Notes

1. "Standards of Identity for Dairy Products". MilkFacts.info. Retrieved February 25, 2013.
2. "CFR - Code of Federal Regulations Title 21: Sec. 133.169 Pasteurized process cheese". U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
3. "CFR - Code of Federal Regulations Title 21: Sec. 133.173 Pasteurized process cheese food". U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
4. "Tesco Everyday Value Singles 257G". Tesco.com. Retrieved February 25, 2013.
5. Under the US Code of Federal Regulations Title 21 (Food and Drugs), Article 133, Section 169 (Pasteurized processed cheese), the allowed usage of the term "American cheese" for certain types of "Pasteurized processed cheese" is detailed. Specifically, in paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of section 133.169, it states *In case it is made of cheddar cheese, washed curd cheese, colby cheese, or granular cheese or any mixture of two or more of these, it may be designated "Pasteurized processed American cheese"; or when cheddar cheese, washed curd cheese, Colby cheese, granular cheese, or any mixture of two or more of these is combined with other varieties of cheese in the cheese ingredient, any of such cheeses or such mixture may be designated as "American cheese."* U.S. Food and Drug Administration (April 1, 1999). "Title 21, Article 133". U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved February 17, 2007.

6. Robert Carlton Brown, *The Complete Book of Cheese* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14293/14293-h/14293-h.htm#Pag>) (New York: Programer Publishing Company, 1955).
Republished in 2006: "Bob" Brown, *The Complete Book of Cheese* (Echo Library, 2006).
7. "The Cheese All Inspected", *The New York Times*, p. 5, December 8, 1878
8. Edited by Edmund Whiner and John Simpson. (1991), *Oxford English Dictionary, I* (Second ed.), Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 397, ISBN 0-19-861258-3
9. American Notes and Queries, 1950, page 159
10. The story of cheese-making in Britain - Valerie Essex Cheke - Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=TbY1AAAAMAAJ&dq=cheddaring+harding&q=harding&p>)

External links

- *Making American cheese on the farm for home consumption* (<http://digital.library.unt.edu/permalink/meta-dc-1501:1>), Farmers' Bulletin No. 1734, U.S. Department of Agriculture, October 1934. Hosted at University of North Texas Government Documents Department.
- *An American-type cheese: how to make it for home use* (<http://digital.library.unt.edu/permalink/meta-dc-1731:1>), Farmers' Bulletin No. 2075, U.S. Department of Agriculture, October 1954.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=American_cheese&oldid=751182661"

Categories: American cheeses | Processed cheese

-
- This page was last modified on 23 November 2016, at 22:05.
 - Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.