

12 Great Ways to Use...

Buffalo Milk Mozzarella

Italian mozzarella cheese is traditionally made from the milk of water buffaloes, huge buffaloes native to India (not to be confused with American “buffaloes,” which are really bison, a different species). Mozzarella manufacturers have only recently added the “buffalo milk” specification because of the emergence of mozzarella made from cow milk. Buffalo milk mozzarella is creamier and smoother than its cow milk counterpart due to the much higher fat content of buffalo milk. It is also higher in calcium and protein, and lower in cholesterol than cow milk. As a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) food, European law regulates its production in the Italian regions of Lazio, Campania, Puglia, and Molise where it originated. Mozzarella is the perfect melting cheese: it melts in your mouth when you eat it fresh and it’s delicious hot too!

1. Make a traditional Caprese salad by layering sliced mozzarella, fresh basil leaves, and sliced tomatoes on a plate. Drizzle a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar on top and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Mozzarella is the cheese of choice for melting on pizza. Making your own pizza dough is easy and worth the effort, but if you’re in a hurry, use store-bought dough, flatbread such as pita or naan, or even a whole wheat bagel as a base. Get creative with toppings!
3. Mozzarella is a classic addition to pasta in any form. Add cubes to cold pasta salads, grate it into hot pasta dishes, or use it in pasta bakes.
4. Layer breaded baked eggplant slices, tomato sauce, mozzarella slices, and grated parmesan cheese in a baking dish and bake at 350°F for 35 minutes. Delicious eggplant Parmesan!
5. Use fresh mozzarella in a variety of green salads. Prosciutto, arugula, and mozzarella are a great combination. Add melon for a fruity kick!
6. Freshly grated mozzarella is delicious on top of egg dishes like frittatas and omelets.
7. Wrap slices of roasted red peppers around bite-sized pieces of mozzarella and secure with toothpicks for a colorful appetizer.
8. Sliced mozzarella is a wonderful in sandwiches. Make panini with a press or on a grill pan and watch the mozzarella ooze out!
9. Make baked mozzarella sticks. Cut mozzarella into thick sticks and dip them first in egg and then in an herbed breadcrumb mixture. Bake for 5 to 6 minutes at 350°F. Enjoy with marinara sauce.
10. Melt mozzarella slices on toasted baguette slices to make crostini. Enjoy Caprese-style with fresh basil and ripe tomatoes, or try adding sliced fresh fruit like peaches or pears.
11. Panzanella salad is a tasty way to use up stale bread. Mix together cubed bread, ripe tomatoes, cubed mozzarella, chopped red onion, and fresh basil and finish with a drizzle of olive oil and vinegar.
12. If you’re feeling adventurous for dessert, drizzle some honey and balsamic vinegar over a slice of mozzarella and top with fresh berries.



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Feta

The Greeks make a variety of cheeses, but there is no doubt that feta is their claim to fame in the cheese world. Feta is a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) food, meaning European law regulates its production because it originated in Greece. True feta cheese is only manufactured in Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Central Greece, the Peloponnese and Lesvos and is made with either just sheep milk or a combination of sheep and goat milk. Feta can be creamy or dry, depending on how long it is aged. After two months of aging, blocks of feta are submerged in a brine solution, enhancing the cheese's characteristic salty, tangy taste.

1. Try making Paximadia, the Greek version of an open-faced tomato sandwich. Pile ripe tomatoes, crumbled feta, and fresh herbs on toasted whole wheat bread. Drizzle with olive oil and enjoy!
2. Make a cheesy pepper spread by combining feta, bell peppers, dried chilies, smoked paprika, lemon juice, and olive oil in a food processor and whipping until smooth. Serve chilled with cut vegetables, crackers, or on toast.
3. Feta is a delicious addition to green salads. To make an authentic Greek salad however, skip the lettuce and just combine tomatoes, cucumber, feta, olives, and red onions with a red wine vinegar and olive oil.
4. Crumble feta into hot pasta dishes or cold pasta salads. It's also great in bean and lentil salads with plenty of fresh herbs.
5. Mix feta into ground meat along with breadcrumbs, an egg, fresh herbs and spices for burgers or meatballs. Feta pairs especially well with lamb.
6. Bake a whole block of feta for 8 minutes at 400°F until the edges are golden. Make it savory by baking it with tomatoes, olives and fresh herbs, or make it sweet by baking it with honey or berry compote. Enjoy with pita wedges.
7. Feta makes a great garnish for soups and stews. Hold some of the salt and make room for feta!
8. If you have figs that are past their prime, bake them with balsamic vinegar and creamy feta for a gourmet dessert or a sweet addition to meat or poultry dishes.
9. Make a refreshing summer salad with cubed watermelon, feta, fresh mint, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar or lemon juice.
10. Add crumbled feta to savory scones or muffins. Chives and feta go great together in a breakfast treat!
11. Try feta in scrambled eggs, omelets, or frittatas.
12. Broil slices of feta on toast with roasted vegetables and a drizzle of olive oil for an appetizer or light lunch.



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Parmigiano-Reggiano

Known as “The King of Cheese,” Parmigiano-Reggiano has been made the same way for over nine centuries, using raw milk aged for an average of 24 months. Production is limited to the Italian provinces of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, and parts of Mantua and Bologna, and is highly regulated by the D.O.C., a set of Italian laws enacted to preserve the traditions and quality of Italian food and wine. Close imitations are made elsewhere, but for the real thing, check the rind for the dotted marks of the D.O.C. Parmigiano-Reggiano has an intense, sharp flavor and granular structure unmatched by other cheeses. A little goes a long way!

1. Keep it classic: grate Parmigiano-Reggiano fresh from the cheese block onto pasta dishes and pizza straight from the oven.
2. Serve Parmigiano-Reggiano chunks on an appetizer platter with fresh and dried fruit, nuts, and cured meat. Chunks are also delicious dipped in balsamic vinegar or jam, with a glass of wine.
3. Add grated or shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano to soups just before serving as a garnish.
4. Top roasted vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano when they come out of the oven.
5. Shave Parmigiano-Reggiano on top of salads. It pairs especially well with balsamic vinaigrettes.
6. Stir some Parmigiano-Reggiano and a little mascarpone cheese into risotto toward the end of cooking for a creamy texture and added bite.
7. Create Parmigiano-Reggiano crisps: line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat and pour several separated heaping tablespoons of grated cheese onto the sheet. Bake at 400°F for 3 to 5 minutes until golden. Once cool, use as an elegant garnish.
8. Dollop a mixture of grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and fresh ricotta cheese on pears poached in white wine and sugar for a nutritious dessert.
9. Elevate your fries: sprinkle oven-roasted potato wedges with Parmigiano-Reggiano and fresh rosemary.
10. Incorporate grated Parmigiano-Reggiano into breadcrumb mixtures used for battered fish, meat, or vegetable dishes.
11. Combine basil, pine nuts, garlic and olive oil in a food processor to make pesto. Stir in grated Parmigiano-Reggiano to make it the Italian way.
12. Save your leftover Parmigiano-Reggiano rinds! Add them whole to stock, soups, sauces, and bean dishes to create a more complex flavor.



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Greek Yogurt

Greek yogurt is a key ingredient in the Mediterranean Diet. It is thicker and creamier than regular yogurt since most of the whey has been strained out, and it has a delicious tangy flavor. Plus, it contains twice the protein of regular yogurt and less lactose as well, making it suitable for some people who suffer from lactose intolerance. Eaten plain, it's a perfect snack. Used in cooking, it lightens, moistens, and supports fresh flavors. And it serves as an excellent stand-in for mayonnaise. Here are some easy ways to use it:

- 1.** Mix Greek yogurt with lemon juice and capers to create a sublime sauce for salmon.
- 2.** Top a bowl of oatmeal or granola with Greek yogurt and fresh berries. Or, layer granola, Greek yogurt, and fresh fruit in a glass to make a breakfast parfait.
- 3.** Spoon Greek yogurt on top of a dish of roasted vegetables.
- 4.** Combine Greek yogurt with minced garlic, fresh herbs, and extra-virgin olive oil for an instant salad dressing.
- 5.** Make a delicious dressing for chicken or seafood salad by combining Greek yogurt, Dijon mustard, and dried or chopped, fresh tarragon.
- 6.** Blend Greek yogurt with honey, a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, and a dash of cinnamon to make a quick sauce for berries or peaches.
- 7.** Use Greek yogurt instead of cream in cold soups.
- 8.** Make a smoothie using Greek yogurt, fresh or frozen berries, and ice.
- 9.** Top pizza dough with Greek yogurt, roasted vegetables, and shredded cheese, and bake at 425°F for about 10 minutes.
- 10.** Combine yogurt, diced cucumbers, garlic, and a bit of extra-virgin olive oil to make a dip for whole grain bread or vegetables.
- 11.** Combine Greek yogurt with a bit of unsweetened peanut butter for an instant snack.
- 12.** Enjoy Greek yogurt topped with honey and chopped walnuts for a dessert treat.



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