



16 Tips for Selecting, Storing and Serving Dairy

Never get caught with a moldy yogurt or curdled milk again! With a little care and these tips, your dairy foods can stay fresher, and enjoyable longer.

At the Store

1. Make the dairy aisle your last stop, to ensure your dairy products don't warm up while you shop.
2. Examine cartons and avoid any with leaks or tears in the packaging; be sure the products are cold.
3. Choose milk that is in cartons or opaque bottles rather than clear glass whenever possible. Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) breaks down easily when exposed to light.
4. Look for the "sell by" date. This indicates the last date a product should be offered for sale. Products may also include "best if used by" information. This is the last day the manufacturer expects the product to be at its optimal taste. However, most products can still be used within a week after either of these dates.
5. Keep all your frozen and refrigerated goods together in the same bag(s) when you check out. Their combined cold temperature will keep them cooler longer.
6. Use insulated bags if possible. Always place your dairy and cheese in a cooler, if you'll be traveling longer than 30 minutes.



At Home

In the Fridge:

7. Place your dairy items in the fridge immediately after arriving home.
8. Store dairy foods, including milk, on an interior shelf of your fridge, rather than the door. Interior temps stay more consistent, whereas the temperature on the door rises each time it's opened.
9. Remove the amount of dairy you need from the container and return the remaining portion to the refrigerator immediately; be sure the container is tightly sealed. Dairy products that have been left out – such as extra cream or milk after tea or coffee – should not be returned to the original container; doing so can contaminate the contents in the package. If in doubt, throw it out.
10. Store blocks of cheese in their original wrapping until used. Place leftovers in an airtight container, or in a moisture-proof wrap, such as parchment paper, foil, or paper cheese bags. If you have the luxury of an extra crisper drawer, use it to store your cheese. The moist atmosphere creates a more hospitable place for cheese to live and breathe. Use cheese within a week of purchasing to enjoy the best flavor and texture.
11. Discard yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese and similar dairy products if mold appears.



In the Freezer:

Some dairy foods can be frozen. However, freezing can affect texture, color, and in some cases, flavor. It's best to use frozen milk and cheese in baked dishes rather than as a fresh ingredient.

12. Freeze milk in a plastic container. Liquids expand when they're frozen so it's important to leave extra room to allow for this expansion. Otherwise, the container may burst from the built-up pressure. To thaw, place the milk in the refrigerator and bring back to normal temperature slowly before using.
13. Freeze soft, shredded cheese in a re-sealable freezer bag. Defrost in the fridge, or add frozen to dishes, such as casseroles, before baking.

On the Table

14. Serve milk, cream, sour cream, cottage cheese, and similar dairy products cold, unless used as an ingredient in a cooked dish.
15. Serve most cheese unwrapped at room temperature for best flavor. Moist cheese, such as ricotta or mozzarella shouldn't be left out of the fridge longer than 2 hours.
16. Create an interesting cheese plate by presenting at least three different types of cheese for your guests and family to enjoy. (It's a great way to learn about different tastes and textures.) For example, you could base your selection on the type of milk used to make the cheese, such as cow's, goat's, and sheep's milk. Another tack is to choose one soft, one semi-soft and one hard cheese. If you've questions or need help, talk with the folks behind the cheese counter, they love to talk cheese – and most will let you sample different types before you buy them.

