

## SHOPPING &amp; TASTING THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

**CHEESE TASTING**

*“Age is something that doesn’t matter, unless you are a cheese.” - Billie Burke*



Cheese tastings allow shoppers to try cheese they might not choose on their own. Talk with your store’s deli or prepared foods manager to decide on the cheese to use for the tasting, any accompanying foods you’ll provide in the tasting, and how to best merchandise the cheese used in the tasting.

### Setup

- \* Cut cheeses into small cubes, wedges or slivers.
- \* Create stations for each cheese being tasted by arranging the samples around ready-to-purchase blocks of that cheese so customers may purchase cheeses they like after the tasting.
- \* Include napkins, toothpicks, and any chosen food accompaniments at each station.

### Tasting Steps

- \* Provide participants with the cheese tasting handouts and a pen or pencil.
- \* Have someone (you or your cheese manager) instruct participants on how to taste the different cheese samples and answer any questions they may have.
- \* After successfully tasting one cheese, have participants move to the remaining stations to complete the tastings. It’s best to have participants begin with the mildest cheese and progress to the strongest.

### Supplies List

- \* **Three to four different varieties of cheese** cut into small pieces. You can hold region-specific events using cheese from a certain area (French, Italian, Spanish, American, etc.); tastings based on cheese types (soft, hard); or any cheese you wish to promote. Visit the Oldways Cheese Coalition ([www.oldwayscheese.org](http://www.oldwayscheese.org)) for information on different types of cheese.
- \* **Toothpicks and Napkins**
- \* **Bread, crackers, olives, fruit, cured meats, or chutneys** to accentuate the flavors of the cheese and sell more! (optional)
- \* **“Cheese Tasting” handout.** Print enough for each anticipated participant.
- \* **Pens or Pencils** for participants to take notes about the cheese they sample.

**OLDWAYS**

HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE



Questions? Comments?  
 Kelly Toups, MLA, RD, LDN  
 617-896-4884  
[kelly@oldwayspt.org](mailto:kelly@oldwayspt.org)  
[www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org)

# Celebrate the Mediterranean Diet

# Cheese Tasting



Have you ever paused in front of the cheese case in our store and wondered how all the interesting cheese tastes liked? Here's your chance to find out, as our guest!



Please join us for a free cheese-tasting

on \_\_\_\_\_  
date



at \_\_\_\_\_  
time

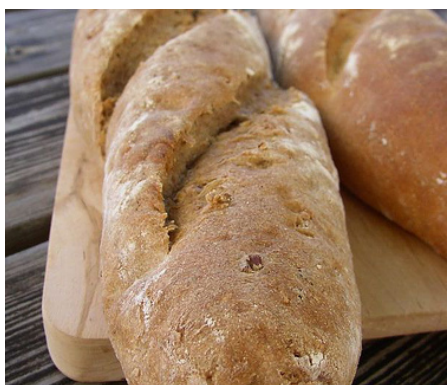


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## Cheese 101

A great French poet once wrote, “So many cheeses, so little time.” With at least a thousand varieties - France alone has hundreds! - the best way to discover your favorite cheese is to taste all different kinds. Each has its own characteristic flavor and texture.

Cheese is classified in many ways: by the process or recipe used to make it, the type of milk used, the texture, or the appearance of its rind. Visit [www.OldwaysCheese.org](http://www.OldwaysCheese.org) to learn about cheese.

## Become a Cheese Wiz

- \* Cheese is usually made from the milk of cows, goats, and sheep or any combination of these.
- \* Most cheese becomes more flavorful as it ages.
- \* Cheese is best stored in the refrigerator, as close to the bottom as possible. The vegetable drawer is ideal.
- \* The harder the cheese, the longer it will stay fresh. Still, it’s wise to buy smaller pieces you can eat sooner, with all cheese.
- \* Do not freeze cheese - it affects texture and flavor.
- \* Bring cheese to room temperature before serving, to experience the best flavor. Remove soft cheese 20 minutes beforehand and hard cheese 60 minutes ahead of time.
- \* When using cheese in recipes, it should be incorporated towards the end of the cooking time when possible.
- \* Bread, crackers, olives, cured meats, fruit, nuts, chutneys, and wine pair well with cheese and make good accompaniments on cheese plates and at cheese tastings.

**Q.** How should cheese be stored in the refrigerator, to make it last the longest?

- a. Uncovered on a plate
- b. Unwrapped in an airtight container
- c. In wax paper or parchment paper
- d. In aluminum foil

**A.** If you picked “c” you’re correct. Cheese is a living food with enzymes and good bacteria that need to “breathe,” so wrapping it loosely in wax paper or parchment, then in plastic wrap, is best. Very strong cheese should then be placed in an airtight container so its aroma won’t affect nearby foods. Change the paper on your cheese every few days - or simply eat it up quickly!



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Tasting cheese of all kinds - hard or soft; Italian, French, or American; raw-milk or pasteurized - is the best way to experience the many, amazing flavors of different cheeses and to discover your favorites.

It's recommended to try no more than four different cheese varieties during a tasting. There are a few important things to note when trying new cheese:

**Appearance** ....Look at the cheese. What's your first impression before tasting it?

**Aroma** .....Smell and note the aromas. Later, reflect on whether the taste reflected your initial smell - or whether the taste was surprising based on the smell.

**Texture** .....How does the cheese feel in your mouth as you chew it?

**Flavor** .....What are the specific tastes you notice? Earthy, buttery, sharp, caramel-like, nutty, milky, peppery, herbal, tart, pungent, grassy, smoky?

**Finish** .....Notice the flavors that remain after tasting. Are they different than the initial flavors? What do you think about the cheese overall? Do you like it?

**Pairing** .....If there are other foods available to eat with the cheese, note how the flavor of each cheese changes as it's paired with foods.

As you taste each cheese, make notes below, so you can remember your favorites, that you'd like to eat again soon or take home today.

	Notes
Cheese #1	
Cheese #2	
Cheese #3	
Cheese #4	