

## Buying, Storing and Serving Gourmet Cheese

Gourmet cheese comes in a large variety with well over 400 varieties just from the French cheese alone. From the mild to the strong, the soft to the hard, cheese is a great way to compliment any meal or snack.

Whether you are having a fancy wine and cheese party, or just enjoying a slice of cheese with an apple for a snack, your gourmet cheese will taste a lot better if you learn how to purchase, store and serve it properly.

### Buying Cheese

When buying gourmet cheese, you want to shop at a place that has a large selection and knows about cheese. That way you'll be able to ask for recommendations if you want some special cheese to go with a certain type of wine or special meal. You can find a good selection of cheese in a specialty market or gourmet grocery store. Buy only what will be consumed within a few days. Flavors and aroma of fine cheeses change over time in a home refrigerator.

When picking out your cheese make sure that it presents the characteristics of that particular style. The interior should not have cracks, mold or discoloration in any form. If you are buying a natural rind cheese make sure it has a rustic appearance. Note that it is normal for Blue and Roquefort style cheese to have some mold and cracks.

### Storing Cheese

You should not store the cheese in the package that it comes in. This packaging is meant for transportation only. The best thing to store your cheese in is waxed paper as you must let air and moisture in. Air and moisture are integral to keeping the cheese in the best possible condition.

### Serving Cheese

When you serve cheese at a party, limit yourself to 4 or 5 types of cheese. You should select cheeses that have a variety of shapes, sizes, textures and flavors. Mix some soft cheese with the hard cheeses. I think cheese looks nice served on a nice wooden tray. Don't mash the cheese in together, make sure each one has enough room without having the tray look empty. If the cheeses served have strong distinctive flavors use separate trays and serving utensils. Mild flavors will pick up aromas and tastes from stronger flavored cheese.

We all know that cheese goes great with crackers, but you can also serve it with fruits like grapes, strawberries, apples and pears. Add some figs to the table for an interesting contrast in taste and visual appeal. Combining cheese with thin slices of onion can be an interesting eating experience.

As a desert, cheese can be very elegant, or as a light course after the entree and before desert. When serving as an appetizer cheese should be coupled with a light dinner due to the filling nature of most cheeses.

While some people believe that cheese must always be chilled, it really has more flavor when it is at room temperature. You do need to watch the cheese, however, especially if your party is going on for a long time. If the cheese gets too warm it will begin to sweat. Put your cheese out about 30 minutes before guests arrive and keep checking throughout the evening.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

Lee Dobbins writes for [www.online-gourmet-foods.com](http://www.online-gourmet-foods.com) where you can find out more about gourmet food.

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