

# Investigating Your Health: Charming Cheese

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objective:** Investigate cheese by comparing the fat content of different cheese, identifying cheeses of varying moisture content, and comparing their nutritional values.

How a cheese is made impacts its fat and calcium content. Cheese is normally made from cow's milk, but it can be made from goat and sheep's milk too. Cheeses can either be hard, semi-hard, semi-soft, or soft based on their moisture content. **Hard** cheeses, like Parmesan, Romano, and Asiago, have the highest amount of calcium compared to other kinds of cheeses. Hard cheeses generally have about 7-8g of fat per ounce. **Semi-hard** cheeses are generally the lowest in calcium, but they have more than 10% Daily Value of Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. These cheeses generally have 8-9g of fat per ounce. Some examples of semi-hard cheese are cheddar, provolone, and Monterey jack. American, Swiss, and Colby are three examples of **semi-soft** cheeses. These cheeses generally rank second for their calcium content and have about 9g of fat per serving. The nutrient content of **soft** cheeses, like mozzarella, feta, Brie, and cottage cheese, vary greatly so it is difficult to compare them to hard, semi-hard, and semi-soft cheeses. Soft cheeses can contain between 3-20% Daily Value of calcium and their fat content can range from 5-15g per serving.

Along with milk, yogurt, and ice cream, cheese is part of the dairy group. Unfortunately, most Americans do not drink or eat enough foods from the dairy group each day. The **calcium** found in milk and other dairy products is very important for your bones! Calcium helps your bones become strong. The milk used to make cheese can either be whole, reduced-fat, or skim. You should aim to choose low-fat cheese (instead of full-fat cheese made with whole milk) to help you meet the recommended 3 cups of dairy products each day. With hundreds of different kinds of cheeses, trying all of them is nearly impossible! Start with some of the most common kinds of cheese such as cheddar, Monterey jack, American, mozzarella, and Parmesan. Use the *Try This at Home* recipe to make a cheesy sauce that can dress up any meal!



1. Go to the grocery store and look at the Nutrition Facts labels for shredded cheddar cheese made with whole milk, 2% milk, and fat-free milk. If you are unable to go to the grocery store, use the handout provided by your teacher or access the nutrient database on USDA's website: <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>. Complete the table below.

CHEESE TYPE			
	Whole Milk	2% Milk	Fat-free Milk
Calories			
Total Fat			
Saturated Fat			
Sodium			
Calcium			

2. Look at the Nutrition Fact labels for Parmesan, cheddar, Swiss, and mozzarella cheese. Try to find labels for each cheese with the same serving size. If you are unable to go to the grocery store, use the handout provided by your teacher or access the nutrient database on USDA's website: <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list>. Complete the Nutrition Facts labels on following page.