

COTTAGE CHEESE

Protein-Rich Ingredient On-Trend in Many Dishes



With its healthy attributes, cottage cheese is appearing on more menus and in recipes. Cottage cheese is part of the family of fresh, rindless cheeses not intended for ripening. It is a fresh, moist, slightly tangy cheese that features small, dense curds and has long been favored by chefs for adding creaminess and protein to side dishes such as fruits, salads and vegetables.

COTTAGE CHEESE FACTS



Cottage cheese is considered one of the first cheeses made in America. In the 18th century, settlers used milk leftovers from making butter to create a soft cheese in their small “cottage” homes.

Total production of cottage cheese in California in 2017 was 108.3 million pounds.



Cottage cheese is made by adding an acid, such as vinegar, or a lactic-acid bacterial culture to pasteurized milk, which separates the milk solids from the liquid whey. After the curd forms, cheesemakers gently cut it into pieces that allow additional whey to drain away. Finally, the curds are rinsed and salted.

Cottage cheese is a great source of protein, riboflavin, calcium and B vitamins.



Commercial cottage cheese is available in nonfat, low-fat (1% milkfat), and whole (4% milkfat) varieties.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store cottage cheese in a refrigerator set at 38°–40°F in the container in which it was sold.
- The “sell by” date stamped on cottage cheese products tells you how long the retail store can keep the product for sale on the shelf.
- If any mold forms on the surface of cottage cheese, discard it immediately.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Cottage cheese is gaining in popularity in kitchens as chefs look to expand their healthy offerings, differentiate dishes or reduce calories.

Cottage cheese is anything but plain, providing an interesting platform for savory and sweet creations. With its mild flavor and creamy texture, cottage cheese can be used in place of cream cheese or ricotta in dips, casseroles, pancakes and desserts. The unique curds can provide an interesting texture to pastry dough or can be blended to a smoother texture before adding to a recipe, such as classic Coeur à la Crème.

Chefs also add cottage cheese to blue cheese dressing to create a chunky texture at a lower cost and with fewer calories.

Front-of-the-House

A recent California Milk Advisory Board consumer survey found that 71% of Americans have a favorable sentiment about cottage cheese, something operators should consider as an easy substitution for sour cream, high-protein addition to avocado toast or mixed with fruit and blended into dipping sauces.

WHAT'S TRENDING

Grocery stores have been moving cottage cheese away from sour cream and positioning it with yogurt; chefs are making similar changes substituting cottage cheese for sour cream to highlight the added protein, reduced fat and lower calories in dishes. To replace sour cream in recipes, blend one cup of cottage cheese with 4 tablespoons of milk and 2 teaspoons of lemon juice.

Cottage cheese is also making an appearance in the “grab-and-go” category as a snack with extra ingredients including crackers with tomato chutney or caramelized onions, as well as nuts and dried fruit.



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YOGURT

Popularity Growing as Healthy Food & Beverage



Yogurt is more popular than ever, thanks to its health benefits, versatility and tart dairy flavor. Production expanded dramatically in the past decade, due primarily to demand for Greek yogurt, which accounts for half of all U.S. yogurt sales. Yogurt drinks – a snack favorite and go-to breakfast beverage – have driven recent growth. California is the nation's leading milk-producing state and is the second largest producer of yogurt.

YOGURT FACTS



Total yogurt production in California in 2017 was 442.4 million pounds, an increase of 12.0% over the prior year.

Yogurt's name is Turkish in origin; it was initially brought to North America by Turkish immigrants in the 1700's.



It was first manufactured commercially in Spain in 1919 by Isaac Carasso whose company Danone was named after his son, Daniel. After Daniel moved to the U.S., he began producing yogurt in New York in the 1940s under the Dannon Yogurt label, which introduced fruit on the bottom in 1947.

The three popular varieties of yogurt – Greek, Icelandic and Australian – are all richer and creamier than traditional yogurt due to differences in straining and cooking. Greek yogurt is the more tart and tangy, which makes it ideal in recipes for savory uses.



The health benefits go beyond the protein, calcium, vitamins B-2 and B-12, and potassium; it's recognized today as a source of probiotics for healthy digestion.

Regular yogurt contains no less than 3.25 percent milkfat, low-fat yogurt contains between 0.5 and 2 percent milkfat, and non-fat yogurt contains no more than 0.5 grams milkfat per serving.



Plain yogurt is unflavored, made from pasteurized non-fat, low-fat or whole milk. Flavored yogurt is sweetened and includes fruit or other flavors. It is not generally used in baking.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store yogurt in a refrigerator set at 38°–40°F in the container in which it was sold.
- If separation occurs, gently stir the liquid back into the yogurt.
- Discard yogurt that has become moldy.
- Freezing yogurt is not recommended.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Chefs recognize that yogurt is an important part of many regional cuisines, including Mediterranean, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, East Indian and Chinese.

Yogurt is wonderfully versatile. It can be used as a flavorful, calcium-rich addition to dips, dressings, shakes and soups. Yogurt can be substituted for higher fat sour cream, and drained through cheesecloth to make yogurt “cheese.” It’s a nutritious substitute for sour cream on salsa, baked potatoes and soups, and for mayonnaise in almost any recipe as well as in dressings and dips. Chefs are also using it as a meat marinade.

When substituting yogurt for milk in baking, do not add any of the baking soda called for in the recipe unless the recipe’s list of ingredients includes brown sugar, molasses, or honey. In that case, use the amount called for in the recipe.

Yogurt tenderizes the protein in flour, resulting in soft-to-the-bite muffins, pastries or cakes. Its slightly acidic flavor adds a bit of tang. You can prevent curdling when using yogurt in hot dishes by adding the yogurt as late as possible during preparation, heating gradually and stirring gently.

Front-of-the-House

Yogurt is a popular meal, snack and condiment. As a result, restaurant operators should have it available as long as they have their doors open. At quick-service restaurants, in both occurrences and items, yogurt mentions on menus are up 40 percent in the past year according to Technomic.

Although delicious on its own, yogurt is often topped with granola, fresh orange, dark chocolate, pistachios, fresh pineapple, toasted coconut, hazelnuts, fresh blueberries, honey, strawberries and kiwi.

WHAT'S TRENDING

The Healthy Choice

Technomic reports that 87% of consumers consider nutrient-dense yogurt a part of healthy diet. Restaurant operators are capitalizing by creating new trends within the cultured dairy market. In the yogurt category, examples include: flavor mash-ups, snacking options with smoothie drinks and smoothie bowls, smoked yogurt and even “boozy” yogurt drinks. Other growing trends in the category are probiotics and higher nutrient density —adding things like vitamins and high-protein as well as hidden fruits and vegetables.

On-the-Go with Yogurt

A significant consumer trend is the idea of “portable protein.” Consumers know that protein is what makes them go. The trick for foodservice operators is to provide that “go” on-the-go. Successful operators can prepare a host of ready-to-go snacks or breakfast foods, packaged for fast pick-up and easy opening. Popular examples include: single-serve yogurt and parfaits (hand-scooped yogurt with fruit and granola).

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SOUR CREAM

Versatile Ingredient & Add-on with Reduced & Fat-free Versions



Sour cream is cultured or acidified light cream. Rich and delicious, it's a traditional addition to Eastern European dishes, a common topping for baked potatoes and nachos, and a great addition to a broad array of dishes. Cultured sour cream, which is the more common type, is soured and thickened by adding lactic acid bacteria to pasteurized cream with at least 18 percent milkfat.

SOUR CREAM FACTS



While sour cream has at least 18 percent fat, reduced-fat sour cream contains 25 percent less fat; this light version has less butterfat than regular sour cream, because it is made from a mixture of milk and cream rather than just cream.

Fat-free sour cream contains no cream at all, as it's made primarily from non-fat milk; this version is made with less than 0.5 g of fat for each 50 g of weight.



Cultured sour cream is made by adding a culture of *Streptococcus lactis* to pasteurized cream and incubating at 72°F until the desired sour flavor and thickness emerge.

The culture produces lactic acid, which is responsible for sour cream's thickness and distinctive flavor.



Manufacturers may use an acid, such as vinegar, instead of lactic acid cultures to produce acidified sour cream.

Non-fat milk solids and stabilizers may also be added to commercial sour cream.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store sour cream in a refrigerator set at 38°–40°F in the container in which it was sold.
- If separation occurs, gently stir the liquid back into the sour cream.
- Sour cream stays fresh for 2-3 weeks after it's been opened. If any mold forms on the sour cream's surface, discard it immediately.
- Sour cream can be frozen. Freezing may slightly change the texture of sour cream, but any difference is unnoticeable in cooked dishes.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Sour cream's versatility as a natural additive has made it a staple in restaurant kitchens. It is kept on hand to make quick dips and dressings, thicken soups and sauces and, of course, as a condiment.

Much like yogurt, sour cream also tenderizes and softens baked goods. Rich and acidic in nature, this semi-liquid acts as a fat to produce moist, tender textures in a variety of sweet dishes, such as cookies, scones and cakes.

The relatively low milkfat in sour cream makes it susceptible to curdling at high cooking temperatures. To prevent curdling when using sour cream in hot dishes, add it as late as possible during preparation, heat gradually and stir gently. Sour cream can be used to enrich a dish after cooking and just before serving.

Because of its rich texture, sour cream is a traditional addition to Eastern European dishes such as beet soup (borscht), potato, pea, cabbage, pickle soup and vegetable soups, and a wide array of other dishes.

Front-of-the-House

Encourage patrons to apply or top California sour cream on their appetizers, entrees, sides and desserts. It's most popular usage is with baked potatoes, where it's often blended with chives, seasoned salt and bacon bits. Chefs are also using it as a topping on crêpes, pancakes and as a dip with vegetable platters.

Sour cream is the California dairy staple that "cools" spicy Mexican-American cuisine such as tacos and chili with its rich, creamy tang. A dollop of sour cream makes a perfect garnish atop steaming tortilla soup or sizzling fajitas, and is the key ingredient for nachos, party dips and dressings.

WHAT'S TRENDING

Dairy Fats are Back!

Dairy fats are not only healthy, but also offer tremendous flavor. Not only sour cream, but whole milk and butter are more popular than ever in recipes at a wide variety of restaurants.

Sour Cream Featured on Pizza

With the growing popularity of vegetarian pizzas, sour cream is appearing as part of a blend with a soft cheese. The freshness and silky taste works great with any number of toppings such as onions, basil and vegetables.

The Baked Potato Debate

Restaurant patrons have an age-old debate regarding toppings for their baked potatoes. Some want butter, others defend their favorite side dishes' accompaniment as sour cream. Here in California, the nation's largest producer of butter, there is no debate, we prefer both!



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CRÈME FRAÎCHE

A Versatile Cream Sure to Delight



French for “fresh cream,” crème fraîche originated in Normandy and is used lavishly in sauces, drizzled over vegetables and spooned on fresh fruit. It is a thickened cream in which lactic acids and naturally occurring bacteria have been allowed to slowly develop into a slightly tangy, nutty flavor and velvety rich texture, ranging from that of sour cream to almost as solid as room-temperature butter. With its higher fat content, crème fraîche is ideal for cooking as it won’t separate or curdle under high heat like sour cream and yogurt.

CRÈME FRAÎCHE FACTS



To make crème fraîche, cream is pasteurized and then seeded with a starter culture, much the way yogurt and cheese are made. The cream is then left until slightly soured and thick.

Crème fraîche is less acidic than buttermilk, yogurt or sour cream, although in general crème fraîche and sour cream are interchangeable in recipes. It is thicker, has a richer flavor, and is less tangy than sour cream.



In France, crème fraîche was traditionally made from unpasteurized cream that naturally contained the right bacteria to thicken it. Since cream is pasteurized in California, crème fraîche is made by adding fermenting agents to cream, such as lemon, with the necessary bacteria.

Crème fraîche will have the fat content of the cream used to make it, typically about 30%, and does not contain any added thickeners.



STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store crème fraîche in the refrigerator, which is typically set at 38-40°F. Keep it tightly sealed in the container and it will typically keep for up to eight weeks.
- If separation occurs, gently stir the liquid back into the crème fraîche.
- If any mold forms on the surface of the crème fraîche, discard it immediately.



FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

Back-of-the-House

Crème fraîche is the ideal flavorful addition for sauces, soups, meats, fish and desserts because it can be boiled and reduced without curdling. Its tangy flavor and luxurious texture adds acidity and richness to a wide variety of dishes.

- For breakfast, serve hot pancakes or warm scones with plenty of crème fraîche. Any omelet is enhanced with a dollop of crème fraîche. Crème fraîche can be whipped by itself and used as a stand-alone topping.
- Stir crème fraîche into foods like risotto, soups and creamy pasta sauces just before serving to add richness, balanced with a mildly tangy flavor.
- Include the appealing flavor of crème fraîche in mashed or au gratin potatoes.
- Gently toss grilled vegetables with a little crème fraîche and season with coarsely ground pepper.
- For desserts, whip crème fraîche with a small amount of sugar and a dash of vanilla and serve chilled on fresh berries or peach shortcakes.

Front-of-the-House

Crème fraîche is a delicious topping that adds a burst of flavor to a variety of appetizers, sides and desserts. Operators can impress patrons by offering crème fraîche alongside sour cream – they're often interchangeable as some like the tanginess of sour cream, while others like the richness of crème fraîche. Crème fraîche can be spooned over fresh fruit or cooked vegetables and is often used as a garnish with soups. It can be used anywhere you might use sour cream, like over a baked potato or a range of ethnic foods that favor creamy toppings.

WHAT'S TRENDING

A New Menu Favorite

Restaurant operators are finding creative ways to showcase crème fraîche on menus, starting with appetizers. The delicious cheese is appearing on more cheese plates and a favorite pairing with caviar. Another fresh discovery is as a secret ingredient in macaroni and cheese.

Added to Beverages

Gourmet coffee shops are adding crème fraîche to coffee beverages. It's also found favor with mixologists adding it to cocktails.



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