



# CATERING FOR CHILDREN

Cheese is one of the most nutritionally complete foods and can play an important - and delicious – part of a healthy balanced diet for children of all ages. Cheese is a concentrated form of milk and as such, is a nutritional goldmine and provides children with a wide range of the vitamins and minerals essential for growing bodies and minds.

Mild cheddar with its delicate, creamy taste is always a favourite with children but don't be afraid to branch out. Britain now produces over 700 named cheeses ranging from tangy West Country Farmhouse Cheddar, crumbly Cheshire, Blue Stilton to creamy Lancashire. And there are probably plenty of other types of cheese being produced in your region.

Growing children are always hungry and offering cheese on your menu as part of a dish or as a healthy snack will keep them nourished, give them energy and a tasty food that they will enjoy.



## Cooking with cheese

Importantly for school caterers cooking with cheese is quick simple and is excellent value for money.

In its guide to introducing the Government's new food based standards for school lunches, The School Food Trust states that "A food from the milk and dairy foods group should be available on a daily basis." This group includes milk, cheese, yoghurt (including frozen and drinking yoghurt) fromage frais and custard but not butter and cream.

Cheese is one of the most versatile foods around – and it's natural. It can be grated, sliced, crumbled, cubed, baked and melted so is excellent for using in a wide variety of cooked dishes. For some recipes, stronger tasting cheeses such as Mature Cheddar or Blue Stilton can be used in smaller quantities to give the same flavour. Another helpful tip to help regulate portion size is to either grate the cheese or use a cheese plane to make sandwiches and rolls.

This leaflet includes a selection of recipes to give you an idea on how cheese can easily be incorporated into school meals. For more recipe ideas please visit: [www.britishcheese.com](http://www.britishcheese.com)

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## Healthy Bodies

According to government statistics over 40% of young people have diets that are deficient in calcium. Our bodies cannot make calcium, we get it from what we eat and drink. It is important that strong bones are built during childhood and early adulthood as after the age of 30 bone loss occurs. Eating a balanced diet that is rich in calcium together with the taking of regular weight bearing exercise can help to build healthy bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis in later life.

Cheese is a goldmine of calcium, just a 30g piece of cheddar (the size of a small match box) provides 222g of calcium – 40% of the Reference Nutrient Intake (RNI) for children aged 7 to 10 years, 28% of the RNI for girls aged 11 to 14 and 22% of the RNI for boys aged 11 to 14.

And the benefits for children don't end there – cheese is great for your teeth too. Eating a small piece of cheese after a sugary snack or drink can help prevent against tooth decay. Cheese is thought to increase the amount of saliva in the mouth, helping to neutralise acid and wash it away. The high calcium and phosphorus content of cheese may help by replacing some of the minerals in tooth enamel – the protective coating on teeth – and further strengthening them.

Cheese contains plenty of the protein, vitamins (A, B and D) and minerals (calcium being just one of them) that are essential for growth, repair and maintenance of our bodies. Protein is essential for forming the building blocks of the body; vitamin A plays a vital role in vision, bone growth, cell division and the immune system; vitamin B12 helps maintain healthy nerve cells and red blood cells and is also needed to make DNA; and vitamin D is needed to help facilitate the absorption of calcium and assist in the formation and maintenance of strong bones.

## Fat Content of Cheese

It is the fat in cheese that provides its great taste and texture. A 30 gram portion of Cheddar (the size of a small matchbox), contains 10.4 grams of fat and just 124 calories. Reduced fat cheeses are available and may be appropriate for some recipe applications. Alternatively if you are looking to reduce the amount of fat in a specific dish, simply use less of a stronger tasting cheese.

## Cheese - a positive choice

The overwhelming view of health experts is that eaten in moderation cheese can and does play a positive and enjoyable role in a healthy balanced diet for people of all ages.

## Recipe suggestions

The following recipe suggestions from the British Cheese Board have been compiled with ease of use and nutrition in mind. Each recipe can be easily adapted to include different vegetables to those suggested and can cater for large numbers.

### Stilton and Celery Wraps

Wraps make the perfect snack - they're quick, easy and absolutely delicious. Try these variations on a theme, using two types of Stilton cheese.

#### Serves 4

*2 plain wraps*

*2 tomato-flavoured wraps*

*1 x 200g tub low fat soft cheese*

*A few Iceberg or Romaine lettuce leaves, shredded*

*3 celery sticks, thinly sliced*

*1 small red onion, very thinly sliced*

*75g (3oz) White Stilton with Apricots*

*75g (3oz) Blue Stilton*

*Freshly ground black pepper*



1. Lay the wraps out on a flat surface. Spread an equal amount of soft cheese over each wrap.
2. Scatter shredded lettuce, celery and onion over each wrap - but not too close to the edge. Season with a little black pepper.
3. Crumble the White Stilton with Apricots over the two plain wraps, then crumble the Blue Stilton over the tomato-flavoured wraps. Roll up tightly and slice in half. Serve at once, or wrap in cling film and refrigerate to eat later.

### Hot Cheddar Kebabs

This recipe uses tasty Farmhouse Cheddar cheese with ciabatta bread and plenty of chunky fresh vegetables.

#### Serves 4 (2 per serving)

*225g (8oz) Farmhouse Cheddar cheese, cut into 16 cubes*

*1/2 ciabatta loaf with sun-dried tomatoes or olives, cut into 16 chunks*

*16 cherry tomatoes*

*1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks*

*1 green pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks*

*Rosemary sprigs or fresh bay leaves*

*1 tablespoon olive oil*

*2 tablespoons lemon juice*

*Freshly ground black pepper*



1. Thread the cubes of Farmhouse Cheddar cheese onto 8 wooden kebab sticks with the chunks of ciabatta bread, tomatoes and peppers, alternating the pieces and adding a couple of rosemary sprigs or fresh bay leaves to each one.
2. Make the baste by mixing together the olive oil, lemon juice and seasoning.
3. Preheat the barbecue, grill or char-grill pan. Brush the kebabs with the lemon juice baste - stirring it first to make sure that the ingredients are blended. Cook the brochettes for about 2 - 3 minutes, turning often, until the cheese just begins to melt and the bread begins to toast. Serve at once.



## Double Gloucester, Ham and Vegetable Pasta Bake

Quick and easy to prepare, this recipe offers children a nutritious and tasty lunch option.

### Serves 4

25g (1oz) butter  
175g (6oz) pasta shapes  
1 onion, chopped  
1 courgette, chopped  
175g (6oz) baby corn, halved  
3 tomatoes, chopped  
1 x 275g jar tomato pasta sauce  
100g (4oz) cooked ham, cut into pieces  
175g (6oz) Double Gloucester cheese  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or oregano, plus a few sprigs to garnish  
Freshly ground black pepper  
2 eggs  
300g (10oz) natural Greek-style yoghurt



1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Lightly grease a large baking dish or individual baking dishes with a teaspoon of the butter.
2. Cook the pasta shapes in plenty of boiling, lightly salted water until just tender, about 8 - 10 minutes, or according to pack instructions.
3. At the same time, melt the butter in a large saucepan and sauté the onion, courgette and baby corn for 5 minutes.
4. Thoroughly drain the pasta and add to the vegetables. Stir in the tomatoes and the pasta sauce. Add the ham, then cut half the cheese into small cubes and stir through the pasta mixture with the chopped fresh herbs. Season to taste then transfer to the prepared dish and level the top.
5. Beat the eggs and yoghurt together. Grate the remaining cheese and stir it into the egg mixture. Season with black pepper. Pour evenly over the pasta. Bake for 20 - 25 minutes until set and golden brown. Serve garnished with fresh herb sprigs.

## British Cheese - Instant Goodness

The British Cheese Board aims to increase consumption of cheese in the UK - particularly cheese produced by its members - by promoting the health benefits of eating cheese.

*What are the benefits of eating cheese?*

- It is one of nature's most complete foods • It contains essential nutrients - protein, vitamins, calcium and other minerals
- It is a natural food source • It is versatile

There are over 700 varieties of British cheese available with a British cheese for every occasion.

The British Cheese Board was formed in 1996 and its members account for a significant proportion of cheese produced in the UK.



For further information on the British Cheese Board please visit [www.britishcheese.com](http://www.britishcheese.com)  
or write to Dragon Court, 27 Macklin Street, London, WC2B 5LX

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