

# Not all cottage cheese is the same

AP — Not just for dieters, tangy-cottage cheese can add creaminess to your salads, dips, casseroles and desserts.

It's an inexpensive source of protein that can also be low in fat, provided you buy the right kind. Reading the label will help you find the fat content and curd size.

Farmer's cheese: About 8 percent fat, the soft form of this higher-fat cottage cheese is made with whole or part-skim milk.

It's also firmer than other cottage cheeses because the whey has been pressed out. (Another form of farmer's cheese is firm and sliceable, similar to mozzarella. This form is not a good substitute for cottage cheese.)

Creamed cottage cheese: Often made with whole milk, creamed cottage cheese contains about 4 percent (or more) fat. The free liquid often gives dishes a softer texture.

Low-fat cottage cheese: Depending on the fat content of its milk base, this cheese can be either 1 or 2 percent fat.

Nonfat cottage cheese: The skim milk used in making this dry curd cheese means that it's fat free.

Dry curd cottage cheese: No milk is added to this cheese, giving it a drier, almost ricotta-like texture. Like the nonfat version, it, too, is fat free.

Cottage cheese products: Cottage cheese can also be whipped, flavored or mixed with tasty ingredients such as herbs, chopped vegetables, or spiced fruit. These products are meant for eating as is, rather than for use in cooking.

Cooking with cheese

Just as cottage cheese varies in fat content, it also comes in different curd sizes, from small to large. Some manufacturers use such terms as California, popcorn, country, farm and pot to describe the curd size.

If you don't know what the terms mean on the labels in your supermarket, check with someone at the dairy counter who's familiar with the dairies in your area. Large curds work best for salads where they'll show up better.

Small curds can be used for another texture in casseroles, cheesecakes and other baked foods. In most recipes, you can use the plain cottage cheeses interchangeably.

However, you should expect the creamed cottage cheeses to make recipes molter.

### Quick ideas

Vegetable Dip: Combine cottage cheese with grated carrot, radish, or onion, then sprinkle with caraway seed and black pepper. Serve with broccoli flowerets or crackers.

Spiced Fruit Topping: In a covered blender container whirl cottage cheese with a dash of cinnamon and sugar. Serve on sliced apples.

Teatime Triangles: Spread triangles of cinnamon-raisin bread with a mixture of cottage cheese and chopped nuts.

Stuffed Celery: Stuff celery ribs with a mixture of drained cottage cheese, chopped green chili peppers and ground cumin.

Muffin Melts: Spread pineapple-flavored cottage cheese onto

toasted English muffin halves. Broil until golden.

Sandwich Spread: In a covered blender container whirl cottage cheese with a clove of garlic, a spoonful of Parmesan cheese and a few dashes of oregano and black pepper. Spread between slices of rye bread.

Stuffed Tomatoes: Stuff hollowed tomatoes with a mixture of cottage cheese, finely chopped olives and celery.

Cheesy Pasta Sauce: Combine equal amounts of cottage cheese and plain yogurt. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, ground nutmeg and black pepper. Pour over hot, cooked fettuccine and toss.

Storing cottage cheese

You can keep unopened cottage cheese in the refrigerator for up to a month after the "sell by" date that's printed on its container. Once the container is opened, cottage cheese remains fresh for up to 10 days.

Store it in the original container in the refrigerator. If there is any mold on the cheese surface, discard the entire container.

## COOKING CALENDAR

To get your classes listed in this column, send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, The Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

will be demonstrating three recipes from Morel's menu — Wild Mushroom Strudel with Walnut Sauce, Morel bisque, and Rogout of Wild Mushrooms on Potato Crostons with Bourain Cheese. Les Saisons is at 304 West Fourth Street. The fee for the class is \$25. Call 645-3400.

Peter Peterson, Tapawingos; Marcus Haight, the Lark; Peter Loren, Opus 1; Rick Halberg, R.L.H.'s Restaurant; Ed Janos, Certified Master Chef, Brian Polcyn, Pike Street; Kathy Rule, Rowe Inn; and Milos Cihelka, Golden Mushroom begins 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 31. Cost \$300 for the series of 8 classes or \$40 a single class. This week's demonstration type class will feature Michelle Miller-Fuller. KitchenAid representative who

will teach you step-by-step how to operate your new KitchenAid mixer. Class offered 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19 at Novi store, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20, Redford store, 7 p.m. Jan. 21, West Bloomfield store; and 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 22 Rochester store. Next week, low calorie recipes for success with Kay Huberty, a registered dietitian. For information about the club's series or demonstration classes, call 637-1300.

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Tim Cikra, executive chef of Morels: A Michigan Bistro, will be teaching a cooking class at Les Saisons in Royal Oak, 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Jan. 16. Cikra

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