



Store cheese like a whiz

1 Once you've removed it from the packaging, wrap it in parchment or waxed paper.

2 Place in a ziplock bag and refrigerate. Don't cover it in plastic wrap, which would block out the air that the enzymes and bacteria in cheese need to survive.

EXCEPTION: Wrap blue cheese in foil; don't place it in the same bag with other cheeses (its mold can affect their flavor.) Soft cheeses should be kept in their original packaging.

Sources: Jane Bauer, education and outreach manager, American Cheese Society; and Laura Werlin, cheese educator and author of *Cheese Essentials*

Can cheese be frozen?

Not long-term, unless you plan on using it in cooked dishes. Freezing cheese for more than 15 minutes can adversely affect its texture; defrosted cheese is not very pleasant to slice or eat.

Sources: Jane Bauer; Patrick Moore, cheese educator in Minneapolis; Laura Werlin

Cool tools Pick the proper utensil for the job.



HARD CHEESES

Cheese plane

Use the center blade to make thin slices from the top of a hard cheese, or cut a chunk from the end with the front blade. It's dishwasher safe.

Calphalon, \$10; at Bed Bath and Beyond.



SOFT CHEESES

Skeleton knife

Holes in the blade keep soft cheese from sticking to the knife, and the fork at the end is great for spearing slices. These are excellent for slicing soft-skinned tomatoes and peaches, too, as well as baguettes.

\$13 each; messermelster.com.

Shop and prep like a pro

We asked a few big cheeses to share their inside tips and tricks.

☐ **DO shop the dell.** Varieties and brands at the specialty cheese island are likely to be more attractive and interesting, but don't overlook the dell section. That's where you can find such gems as Tillamook Cheddar and Parrano, a Dutch cheese that falls between

Parmesan and Gouda. Specialty cheeses might be a bit pricier, but they're also often more flavorful—a little goes a long way.

☒ **DO look for bits.** At the supermarket, check out the "orphans" basket. It contains leftover ends and other pieces that the store sells at bargain prices, often just \$1 to \$2. It's a great way to try new cheeses without a big investment.

☐ **DON'T chill.** If you're offering cheese and crackers, bring the cheese out of the fridge 45 minutes to an hour before serving. Cheese is best at room temperature: 68 to 70 degrees. If you're in a warmer room, allow less time for it to be out.

☐ **DON'T get rid of moldy cheese automatically.** If you spot some green, it's all right to cut it off and use the rest, but only with firmer cheeses, like Cheddar or Jack. Toss soft cheese such as mozzarella, because it's more likely that there's mold throughout—which could make you sick.

☒ **DO make the most of those rinds.** Use a Parmesan rind to add flavor to a soup—chicken, bean, cream or minestrone.



Shred cheese with ease

Whether you prefer a box grater or a food processor, make the task simpler by placing the cheese in the freezer for 10 minutes first. That way it won't get gummy as you shred it.



What's popping on Pinterest

Readers choose their favorite cheese recipes on the All You page.

