

# Cheese Characteristics Matrix

A description of major varieties of cheeses popular among American consumers.

Variety	Moisture (%) (Maximum) <sup>1</sup>	Fat (%) (Minimum) <sup>2</sup>	Pasta Filata <sup>3</sup>	Brine/Surface Salted	Ripened by	Origin
Blue/Bleu	46	50	no	yes	mold	France
Brie	52.5	20	no	no	bacteria and mold	France
Cheddar Mild	39	50	no	no	bacteria	England
Cheddar Sharp	39	50	no	no	bacteria	England
Colby	40	50	no	no	bacteria	US
Cream	55	33	no	no	unripened	US
Feta	60	42	no	yes	bacteria	Greece
Gouda/Edam	45	48	no	yes	bacteria	Netherlands
Havarti	54	30	no	no	bacteria	Denmark
Gruyere	39	45	no	yes	bacteria	Switzerland
Monterey Jack	44	50	no	no	bacteria	US
Mozzarella	60	45	yes	yes	bacteria	Italy
Muenster	46	50	no	no	bacteria	France
Parmesan	32	32	no	yes	bacteria	Italy
Processed American	40	50	no	no	bacteria	US
Provolone	45	45	yes	yes	bacteria	Italy
Queso Fresco	59	18	no	no	unripened	Mexico
Ricotta	73	4	no	no	unripened	Italy
Swiss	41	43	no	yes	bacteria	Switzerland

<sup>1</sup>Some cheeses have a range in moisture permitted, but these are the highest permitted amounts.

<sup>2</sup>Some cheese standards use percentage by weight of total solids (e.g., cheddar) while others use percentage by weight of the cheese (e.g., cream).

<sup>3</sup>Curd is stretched in hot water to align the protein molecules and provide stretch to the curd.