

Soft Cheese Overview

Description

- High moisture content
- Short shelf-life
- Texture ranges from creamy and spreadable to soft and crumbly
- Generally mild flavored
- With age, more pronounced flavors
- Some have deliberate mold rinds that add to the cheese's taste
- Often used for snacks, appetizers, and desserts
- Often very fruit friendly

Types of Soft Cheese

Unripened

- Also called *fresh* cheese
- Not aged or aged for a very short time
- Popular Varieties:
 - **Cream Cheese**
 - **Chèvre** (SHEV)
 - **Mascarpone** (mas cahr POHN ay)
 - **Queso Fresco** (KEH soh FRES co),
 - **Queso Blanco** (KEH soh BLAHN co)
- Brine-cured
 - An unripened “pickled cheese” because it is cured in a (salt) brine solution
 - May also be sold packaged in brine
 - Popular Varieties: **Feta** (FET tah)



Chèvre



Mascarpone



Queso Fresco



Feta

Soft-ripened

- Cheese is surface-ripened by mold spores applied to surface.
- White, edible mold rind develops
- These cheeses ripen from the outside, in developing creamy, spreadable texture
- Mild taste, firm texture when young
- Stronger taste, creamier, almost runny, when aged
- Popular Varieties:
 - **Brie** (Bree)
 - **Camembert** (KA mem BEAR)
 - Some soft-ripened **Chèvre** (SHEV)
 - **Creamy Blue**



Brie

Photo courtesy of Lactalis Deli, Inc.



Camembert

Handling Tips

- Keep refrigerated at 41°F (5°C) or below.
- Short shelf life (generally 3-10 days once rind is cut and/or package is opened).
- The mold on surface-ripened cheese can spread to other cheeses, resulting in cross contamination.
- Use separate cutting tools, and clean and sanitize the area after cutting cheeses with mold.
- Keep them wrapped when on display.
- Rotate stock according to the sell-by date. First, in; first, out rotation.
- If undesirable mold appears on the surface, follow store handling guidelines.