**Cheese**

Cheese is a type of dairy product produced in a range of flavors, textures, and forms by coagulation of the milk protein casein. It comprises proteins and fat from milk (usually the milk of cows, buffalo, goats or sheep). During production, milk is usually acidified and either the enzymes of rennet or bacterial enzymes with similar activity are added to cause the casein to coagulate. The solid curds are then separated from the liquid whey and pressed into finished cheese.[1] Some cheeses have aromatic molds on the rind, the outer layer, or throughout.

Over a thousand types of cheese exist, produced in various countries. Their styles, textures and flavors depend on the origin of the milk (including the animal's diet), whether they have been pasteurised, the butterfat content, the bacteria and mold, the processing, and how long they have been aged. Herbs, spices, or wood smoke may be used as flavoring agents. Other added ingredients may include black pepper, garlic, chives or cranberries. A cheesemonger, or specialist seller of cheeses, may have expertise with selecting, purchasing, receiving, storing and ripening cheeses.[2]

Most cheeses are acidified by bacteria, which turn milk sugars into lactic acid; the addition of rennet completes the curdling. Vegetarian varieties of rennet are available; most are produced through fermentation by the fungus Mucor miehei, but others have been extracted from Cynara thistles. For a few cheeses, the milk is curdled by adding acids such as vinegar or lemon juice.