

What is whey?

Whey is the liquid leftover from curdled and strained milk. Sweet whey refers to whey from cheeses that have been curdled using rennet, Acid whey refers to whey from cheese made using an acid.

Whey cheeses

As long as there have been cheese makers there have been thrifty people looking to get more from their whey.

There are a number of traditional cheeses made from whey or a mixture of whey and milk. Here are a few.

Gjeost and its relatives Brunost (Norwegian), or mesost (Swedish), mysuostur (Icelandic), myseost (Danish) or Braunkäse (German) are brown Scandinavian whey cheeses. The Norwegian name brunost means brown cheese, and the others simply mean whey cheese. Gjeost is a goat milk variant and its name means goat cheese. These are all made by caramelizing the milk sugars remaining in the whey and have a distinctive sweet sour flavor.

Ricotta (literally meaning "recooked") uses acidified whey which is heated to near boiling to extract the remaining protein from the whey. Ricotta is a very ancient cheese and there are references to it dating from

Ziergerkase- I could find no mention of this cheese that didn't relate to material from Ricki Carroll. That doesn't mean that it isn't a traditional cheese just that I couldn't find information on it. The cheese that she describes and gives a recipe for in Home Cheesemaking is made using acidified whey, pressed and soaked in wine.

Manouri is a semi-soft fresh white cheese made from the drained whey from feta production (sheep or goat milk). Cream is sometimes added. It is similar to feta cheese but creamier and less salty or salt-free.

Making whey cheeses

Whey cheese is something that I haven't attempted myself. But Sarah has volunteered to share a little bit about her experiences making whey cheese.

Cooking with whey

So you have a bunch of whey from your cheese making endeavors and you don't want to pour it down the drain but you're not quite sure what you can do with it?

Whey Nutrition and Shelf life

Nutrition

Sorry to disappoint but whey is not the protein powerhouse that you may have been led to believe. Whey contains protein but not nearly as much as milk, since we've collected most of it to make our cheese. There is some confusion because concentrated whey protein which is marketed to bodybuilders is a very good source of protein. Milk whey liquid contains relatively little protein. A 1-cup portion contains approximately 2g of protein. However, the protein it does contain is high-quality, meaning it contains all the essential amino acids, or protein-building blocks, you need from your diet every day.

The predominant nutrient in milk whey liquid is carbohydrates in the form of lactose, or milk sugar. A 1-cup serving of sweet whey or acid whey contains nearly 13 g of carbs, accounting for three-quarters of its roughly 60 calories.

Whey does contribute several minerals to your diet, with differences depending on the milk coagulation process. For example, 1 cup of acid whey provides 250 mg of calcium and 200 mg of phosphorus, or 25 percent of your recommended daily intake while sweet whey gives you only about half this amount. Acid whey supplies approximately 10 percent of your daily need for zinc, and sweet whey offers one-third of this. Both forms supply your diet with roughly 7 percent of your daily potassium and magnesium.

The vitamin content of milk whey liquid is pretty much the same for both sweet and acid whey. A cup contributes 30 percent of your daily requirement for riboflavin, 20 percent for both pantothenic acid and vitamin B-12, and just under 10 percent for thiamine and vitamin B-6.

Shelf life

While the whey you use for cheese making must be fresh, as in a couple of hours off the cheese fresh, whey used for cooking and drinking has a long shelf life. According to the National center for food preservation liquid whey will keep for between 10 and 21 days depending on its level of acidity.

Baking

Whey and baked goods go together naturally.

Whey works as a flour conditioner. Whey is acidic and acidity in moderation strengthens the gluten in flour allowing greater elasticity and "rise" from your yeast dough. It also acts much like milk, tenderizing the crumb of your bread by adding unfermentable sugars and increasing browning. Because of this whey is better suited to sandwich breads and rolls than to crusty hearth breads.

Whey is also a fantastic substitute for buttermilk in any recipe. Whey pancakes, whey biscuits, whey cornbread, and whey muffins all work beautifully.

Whey as a substitute for stock

You can use whey just about anywhere you would use stock. You can use it as all or part of the liquid for soups. It adds a tangy flavor. You can either add it to a regular soup recipe (I found that creamy soups or soups with a lot of starch work especially well) or use it in a recipe intended for whey.

Beyond soup you can use whey instead of milk or stock in mashed potatoes or as a cooking liquid for rice and other grains. I especially like quinoa made with whey supplemented with a bit of bullion powder. Use your imagination and try adding whey to a dish.

Whey Beverages

You can drink whey straight of course, but many people like to sweeten it up a bit. I've brought some whey lemonade for you to try. It's simply whey, lemon juice, sugar and a bit of mint. You could easily do something similar with other fruits (kind of like an aqua fresca, just blend together some fruit and whey and sweetener of your choice) or fruit juices. Some people also like to combine whey with powdered beverage mixes like kool-aid or tang.

You can also use whey as the liquid in a smoothie. Just frozen fruit and enough whey to make it blend-able.

Other uses for whey

Whey is used for animal feed. On a commercial scale it's frequently fed to pigs and if you happen to have one by all means give some to the pig. It's ok to give some to your dog but not your cat.

Whey is used in some recipes for fermented pickles as a catalyst for lactic fermentation. I haven't tried this because many people have told me that it makes the pickles soft and if there is one thing I really despise it is a squishy

pickle.

Whey is can also be used to soak whole grains, particularly whey containing active cultures. The acidity and enzymes help to breakdown the cellulose and make them more digestible.

Whey can also be used in marinades where the acidity helps to denature and tenderize meat proteins, I would caution though that you can overdo marinades like this and end up with an unpleasantly squishy steak if you let it sit for more than an hour or two.

There is an old beauty treatment that calls for washing your face with whey for clear skin. I have no idea if it works and a lot of those old treatments don't but some do and if you feel like giving it a try I'd love to hear the results.

Plants that like acidic conditions can be watered with whey.
Does anyone here have a use for whey that they would like to share.