

Tips on Storing Cheese

1. Always re-wrap cheese in fresh wrapping, preferably in waxed or parchment paper, after the cheese has been opened to avoid having the cheese dry out or pick up other flavors. Remember that natural cheese is a living organism, with enzymes and bacteria that need air and moisture to survive. Thus, re-wrapping the cheese in paper and then in plastic wrap to create a micro-environment for the cheese is the preferred storage treatment. However, you should not leave cheese in the same wrappings for extended periods of time.
2. The recommended temperature range for storing cheese is between 35 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit, at a high humidity level, preferably in the bottom vegetable/fruit bin. To avoid accidentally freezing the cheese, don't store it near the freezer compartment or in the meat bin.
3. Double wrap strong, pungent cheeses, such as blue, aged brick, or washed rind varieties, to avoid having their aromas permeate other foods. It is best to place these cheeses in an airtight container for extra assurance against aroma leakage. And it's best to store cheeses separately if possible, especially blues, washed rinds and milder cheeses, as they will pick up each other's flavors.
4. If cheeses other than fresh cheeses and blues have surpassed their expiration dates (imprinted on the packaging) or if the cheese develops a blue-green mold on the exterior, make a cut about a ½ inch below the mold to ensure that it has been entirely removed; the remaining cheese will be fine.
5. In general, never freeze natural cheeses, as they may lose their texture, and in some cases their flavor profiles will be seriously altered. If you must freeze cheese, allow the cheese to thaw slowly in the refrigerator and use it for cooking, as the texture will become crumbly and dry after it is defrosted.
6. If stored and wrapped cheeses are overly dry, develop a slimy texture, exhibit ammoniated or any off odors, it's best to discard them. If you find these characteristics in cheeses at your local shop, do not purchase them, as they are past their prime. If a retailer's offerings consistently display the above characteristics, it's best to find another resource for your cheese.