



# **Cottage Cheese: A Nutritional Powerhouse Takes Center Stage for National Nutrition Month**

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March is National Nutrition Month®, an annual campaign by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that promotes the importance of making informed food choices and healthy eating habits. Established in 1973, this initiative raises awareness about the significance of proper nutrition for individuals of all ages.



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As part of this campaign, St. Louis District Dairy Council celebrates cottage cheese for its growing popularity as a powerhouse superfood. “Social media influencers have played a significant role in highlighting cottage cheese’s versatility in recipes, nutritional benefits and alignment with current health and wellness trends,” said Maggie Cimarolli, registered dietitian and nutrition educator with St. Louis District Dairy Council.

### **Versatile Ingredient**

The rising popularity of cottage cheese stems from its versatility in the culinary world. From savory to sweet, this dairy product has become a staple in various recipes. Its mild flavor and creamy texture enhance a wide range of recipes. “Use cottage cheese for a

light and creamy alternative to cream cheese, ricotta or Greek yogurt,” Cimarolli said. “The neutral taste allows for a sweet or savory flavor, depending on what ingredients are added.”

Cottage cheese enhances both traditional and innovative recipes for creative cooks and the health conscious. With a quick online search, this star ingredient is found in a variety of dishes, including salads, smoothie bowls, sandwiches, dips, ice cream and baked goods.

## **Remarkable Nutrition Profile**

Beyond its culinary flexibility, cottage cheese boasts a remarkable nutritional profile. Packed with high-quality protein and essential vitamins and minerals, it aligns with the demands of health-conscious consumers. “The high protein-to-calorie ratio keeps you full longer,” Cimarolli said. “A half cup of low-fat cottage cheese has around 12 grams of protein.”

Cottage cheese also provides healthy fats, calcium, B vitamins and phosphorus. These nutrients support the immune system; energy metabolism; kidney function; nerve function; and healthy skin, bones and cells. Cottage cheese is also more digestible for people with mild lactose intolerance due to a lower lactose content.

## **Health and Wellness Trends**

As individuals prioritize fitness and overall wellness, the demand for foods supporting these goals has increased. Cottage cheese, with its protein-rich content and versatility, seamlessly fits into various meal plans, including high-protein, low-carb and balanced eating meal plans. Cottage cheese, like all dairy foods, pairs well with other food groups and is a nutritious option for snacks and meals. “The dairy case has something for everyone, no matter what health goals are in place,” Cimarolli said. “Cottage cheese is a great example of that with different calorie versions, large package options and also flavored individual servings.”

For more information on National Nutrition Month®, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). To download a tip sheet on cottage cheese or for more information on dairy’s benefits, visit [www.stldairycouncil.org](http://www.stldairycouncil.org) or contact Maggie Cimarolli at 314-835-9668 or [MCimarolli@STLDairyCouncil.org](mailto:MCimarolli@STLDairyCouncil.org). Follow us on Facebook and Instagram at STLDairyCouncil.

*The St. Louis District Dairy Council (SLDDC) is a nonprofit nutrition education organization funded by local dairy farmers. Since 1932, SLDDC has served 131 counties in central/southern Illinois and eastern Missouri as the go-to educational*

*resource and advocate for the role of dairy foods as part of a healthful diet. As The Nutrition Education People, we are proud to spread knowledge to local communities, bridging the gap between local dairy farmers and consumers. The staff is comprised of professionals with experience in nutrition, food service management, education and communication, and we take pride in delivering engaging programs throughout the communities we serve.*