

News monitored for: Yum! Restaurants

FIRST CITY

CHEF'S TABLE

Increasing its range of Italian-inspired menu offerings, Pizza Hut has recently introduced a whole new range of Italian inspired hand stretched thin crust pizzas - *Tuscani Singles* - that have been combined with some unique Italian-inspired gourmet toppings. The range was introduced at a live cook-out session - Chef's Table - led by Chef Arjyo Banerjee, Head Chef, Pizza Hut, which saw him prepare a range of recipes live as part of a special 'Menu for the Day'. The Chef's Table, held at Basant Lok, New Delhi, was the third in the series of such events with the previous two held in Bangalore earlier this year.

The special 'Menu for the Day' included the range of *Tuscani Singles* along with tempting appetisers, sinful desserts, all beautifully complemented by wine, sangrias and mocktails. The guests were greeted by welcome drinks like *Sangria*, *Mango Mint Margarita* and *Ginger Lime Cooler*. The lunch started with a traditional *Minestrone Soup*, followed by *Crusty Bruschettas* and *Arancinis*. *Pollo Heaven*, *Gardiner* and *Verde*, the pizzas newly launched with the *Tuscani Singles* range were prepared using fresh & flavourful ingredients, as a highlight by the Chef and served to the guests. This was topped off with indulgent desserts to complete the meal - *Choco Chip Cookie Sundae* and a *Cheesecake Platter*. All courses were paired with wines served at the event.

Tuscani Singles is a range of hand stretched thin crust pizzas that takes inspiration from the Tuscan region in Italy and is combined with unique Italian gourmet toppings that have been specially selected and combined by the Chef to give a variety of flavors and textures. The Range of *Tuscani Singles* includes eight vegetarian and non-vegetarian recipes, starting with the authentic *Margherita* with ripe tomatoes, basil and mozzarella. Also on offer, is the *Gardiner* with a medley of Mediterranean vegetables and parmesan as well as the *Verde* with a balsamic glaze and gouda cheese. The non-vegetarians can choose from *Florence Chicken* with smoked chicken, mushrooms and a variety of peppers, *Pollo Heaven* with a pesto cream sauce and other mouthwatering recipes.

Speaking on the Chef's Table, Head Chef Arjyo, said, "The Chef's Table is a personal passion of mine. For me, it is always a pleasure to play with new recipes, infusing them with my inspirations and the Chef's Table has been a truly great opportunity to do that with people who are food connoisseurs. This new range of *Tuscani Singles* combines all these elements to provide a remarkable culinary experience. I would encourage all Italian food lovers to visit Pizza Hut and taste these pizzas. I promise it will be an experience like no other!"

Tuscani Singles are available at all Pizza Hut restaurants across India.



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cheesy

*"What a friend we have in cheeses!
For no food more subtly pleases,
Nor plays so grand a gastronomic part"*
William Cole

The exact origin of cheese is unknown. It is an ancient food that was probably discovered around 7000 BCE. As the story goes, an Arab nomad was carrying milk in a saddlebag made of sheep's stomach. The leftover enzymes in the bag combined with the milk to separate the curds from the watery whey, making the nomad the first accidental cheesemaker. Cheesemaking has come a very long way since then. It's a sliding scale

GOING ORGANIC Ayesha Grewal

of art and science, and results in a product that is now eaten in most countries around the world.

Making Cheese

In a very simple nutshell, there are four basic steps in making cheese:

1. Add bacteria or mold to the milk.

These primarily determine the cheese's flavours and texture.

2. Separate the solid curds from the watery whey. Usually, this is done by adding rennet, an enzyme used to digest milk or some form of acid such as lime juice or vinegar.
3. Add salt to the separated curds. Fresh cheeses, such as *paneer* or cottage cheese, are now ready to consume.
4. Aged cheeses are set aside to mature. The maturation process can last from a few days to a few years, depending on the cheese. In general, the more aged a cheese, the harder it becomes.

Types of Cheeses

Today, there are over 2,000 different varieties of cheeses made around the world. The categorisation of cheese can be endless. They can be distinguished by whether or not the milk is pasteurised, the fat content of the milk used, differences in cheese making processes, etc. However, the two most common categorisations are based on the origin of the milk and the texture of the cheese.

Most cheeses are made of milk from

cows, or buffaloes, or sheep, goats, or a combination of these. Other more unusual cheeses are made from milk from camels, or yak, and - believe it or not - Moose milk!

The texture of a cheese depends on its moisture content. Soft cheeses include ones like cream cheese, brie, camembert, and *paneer*. Gorgonzola and Stilton are examples of semi-soft cheeses, while Cheddar and Emmentaler are semi-hard. Finally, hard cheeses include Parmigiano-Reggiano and Pecorino Toscano. In general, the soft cheeses contain the highest level of moisture, are ready to eat faster, and typically have a shorter shelf life than the other kinds.

Benefits of Eating Cheese

Cheese is an excellent source of protein and other essential nutrients such as phosphorous, vitamin A, vitamin D, zinc, riboflavin, and vitamin B12. This is good news, especially for vegetarians who can be deficient in Vitamin B12, which helps prevent pernicious anemia.

Cheese is also a great source of calcium. As such, eating cheese can help fight cavities, reduce dental decay and improve overall tooth health. Eating cheese after a meal can not only reduce tooth decay, but further can reverse cavities in their early stages.

Similarly, the high levels of calcium in cheese helps strengthen bones, while the vitamin B further helps the development and strengthening of bones and cartilages. It's important to note that simply consuming calcium won't always help - the calcium must be in a form that is absorbable and useable by the body. Cheese, of course, has both, which makes it an essential ingredient in fighting osteoporosis.

In addition, studies suggest that cheese helps prevent breast and colon cancer. However, in spite of its various benefits, hypertensive individuals should avoid cheese. While the sodium content of a cheese depends on how much salt the cheesemaker added, it is usually relatively high.

So, the good news is that eating cheese, in the right quantities, can actually be good for you! The bad news is that you need to be careful about the



Ageing Cheese

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milk that is used to make the cheese you decide to include in your diet. For instance, if the cow is fed stuff that has harmful chemicals and toxins in it - like feed that is grown using chemical pesticides or fertilizers; or if she is given antibiotics or hormones to increase the amount of milk she produces, chances are that they will end up in your cheese!

Organic Cheese vs Cheese with Chemicals?

The answer to this one should be fairly obvious...! Of course, organic cheese, which is made from milk that doesn't have chemical residues and is free of growth hormones and antibiotics is clearly the better alternate. However, there are other reasons why cheese from organic milk is better than that made from milk from cows that are given chemically grown feed.

Many people maintain that organic cheese tastes better. Most cheesemakers will tell you that what you feed the animal is reflected in the quality of the milk. So, when you get milk with yellowish cream, which shows that its high in beta carotenes, it's safe to assume that the animal is eating fresh, green grass. Similarly, when the animal is given healthy, organic feed, it is reflected in the milk she produces and the resulting cheese. You can't make good cheese with bad milk!

Further, research has confirmed that organic milk has as much as 71% more Omega-3 fatty acid than non-organic milk. Also, organic milk is higher in vitamins and tests have shown that organic milk is also higher in beta-carotene and antioxidants. All of this is because the organic feed is more nutritious than grains that are otherwise fed to the animals.

Finally, organic methodologies are more gentle on the animals themselves. They are not pumped full of hormones to make them produce more milk than their natural capacity.

Most of these studies have been conducted in Europe and the United States. However, they are very applicable to us as a lot of the cheeses that we eat, such as cheddar, gouda, edam, feta, and so on is imported from these places.

Interesting Facts About Cheese

- On an average, it takes about 10 kilos of milk to make 1 kilo of cheese
- The most expensive cheese in the world is made from Moose milk and costs about ₹45,000 a kilo.
- The Vedas indicate that cheese was consumed in India as far back as 6000 to 4000 BCE.
- The more you age a cheese, the less lactose it has; Cheddar has about 5%.
- Cheese develops its optimal flavour and texture at room temperature. Take it out of the refrigerator at least 30 minutes prior to serving
- Mice do not like cheese!



Cheeses made by the author

CHEESE RECIPES

Brie and Asparagus Omelette

This is by far one of my absolute favourite recipes, and it's really easy.

Ingredients:

- As always, make sure you have good quality ingredients!
- 4 eggs
- About 100g of Neige (a locally made organic brie-like cheese)
- 8 stalks of asparagus
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Salt

Method of Preparation:

1. Beat the eggs lightly with about 1 tablespoon of water.
2. Cut off the thick base of the asparagus and steam the spears.
3. Cut the Neige in thin slices.
4. Add the butter to a pan and heat.
5. Once the butter has melted, turn the heat down to low.
6. Add the beaten eggs and let the mix stand for about 20 seconds.
7. Add the Neige and asparagus.
8. Fold the omelette in half.
9. Cover the pan with a lid until the egg is cooked.
10. Serve with some nice, hot multi-grain organic toast!

Basic Cheese Platter

This isn't as much of a recipe as a suggestion for a basic cheese platter.

- I think a cheese platter should include at least three different types of cheeses.
- I would include a fresh cow's milk

cheese infused with mixed herbs; Neige; and Asiago, a semi-hard cheese.

- Fruit goes well with cheeses. I like apples, apricots, or grapes. If you have access to good dry apricots, they go very well with these cheeses.
- Remember to take your cheese out of the refrigerator about half an hour to an hour before serving.
- Serve with crackers and sliced baguette.

Cheese at The Altitude Store

The Altitude Store carries a wide range of artisan cheeses made in India using organic milk. We carry fresh cow's milk and goat's milk cheeses, infused with herbs such as garlic, cracked pepper, and mixed herbs. Our range also includes Neige (a brie-like cheese), Boccconcini, mozzarella, feta, gouda, edam, cheddar, diet cheddar, asiago, yak cheese, sliced cheese, and parmesan.



Ayesha Grewal is the founder of The Altitude Store. She is a passionate entrepreneur with extensive experience in the artisan and organic food sectors. Ayesha has also created two artisan food operations in India and an investment company that provides capital to, incubates, and advises such businesses in India and abroad. You can reach her at ayesha@thealtitudestore.com