

BEST IDEA

COTTAGE CHEESE

is back in favour!

For a long time, cottage cheese was the red-headed stepchild of the dairy world... until social media influencers discovered the wonders of this high-protein curdled milk product.

BY CHARIS TORRANCE

A total '70s staple, cottage cheese has made a triumphant return to our plates – and it's about time. Foodies on TikTok and Instagram are embracing this versatile ingredient, using it on toast, in eggs, in flapjacks and even as the base for ice cream.

There may still be a few detractors out there, but we hope we can convert you! Cottage cheese offers a wide range of benefits for those seeking a healthier lifestyle, and it's 100% compatible with low-carb, high-fat (LCHF) and ketogenic diets.

1 PROTEIN POWERHOUSE
Cottage cheese is known for its high protein content, making it an excellent dietary addition if you're following an LCHF or keto lifestyle – in fact, it contains roughly 11 g protein per 100 g serving. It's also a complete protein, meaning that it contains all the essential amino acids necessary for optimal bodily function.

Protein plays a crucial role in muscle repair, hormone production and the immune system. When following a low-carb or keto diet, preserving lean muscle mass becomes even more vital as your body predominantly relies on fats for energy.

2 LOW IN CARBS
A typical serving of cottage cheese contains only about 4g carbs per 100 g, primarily in the form of lactose, a naturally occurring milk sugar. This low carbohydrate profile makes cottage cheese an ideal choice if you're trying to stay in ketosis, a metabolic state where the body burns fat for energy instead of carbohydrates, and if you are watching your blood sugar. Cottage cheese contains casein protein, which helps to prevent blood sugar spikes.

3 QUALITY FAT CONTENT
Although cottage cheese doesn't match the fat

content of other dairy products like cream or butter, it still offers a moderate amount of fat. The fat present in cottage cheese primarily comprises unsaturated fats, including heart-healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These healthy fats contribute to better cardiovascular health and help to regulate blood sugar levels, which is an excellent thing for people with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes.

4 WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Cottage cheese can play a significant role in your weight management strategy. Thanks to its high protein content, it helps you feel full for longer. Protein triggers the release of hormones like leptin, signalling to your brain that you're full, which reduces the temptation to overeat or indulge in unhealthy snacking.

5 BONE HEALTH BOOSTER

Cottage cheese has three nutrients that help to maintain strong, healthy bones:

- **Calcium** is key to preventing conditions like osteoporosis, which can lead to bone fractures. A 100 g serving of cottage cheese contains 83 mg calcium, contributing to your daily calcium needs.
- **Phosphorus** is critical for proper bone development and strength, especially during growth spurts or when healing from a fracture. Cottage cheese's phosphorus content further enhances its role in supporting bone health.
- **Protein** helps to maintain bone mineral density and can reduce the risk of fractures.

What sets cottage cheese apart is the high bio-availability of its calcium and phosphorus, meaning your body can easily absorb and utilise these micronutrients. This makes cottage cheese an excellent choice for people who are lactose-intolerant and struggle to get these important bone-building nutrients from other dairy sources.

6 PROBIOTICS FOR GUT HEALTH

Some cottage cheese brands contain live and active cultures, aka probiotics. These beneficial bacteria promote gut health by establishing a balanced gut microbiome. A well-balanced gut microbiome is linked to various health benefits, including improved digestion, enhanced immune function and potentially even better mental health. Check the product label for the presence of live cultures.

7 CULINARY VERSATILITY

Cottage cheese is a versatile ingredient that can be used in both savoury and sweet dishes. Here are some creative ways to incorporate cottage cheese into your meals:

- **Smoothies:** Enhance your morning smoothie with cottage cheese for added creaminess and protein content.
- **Snacks:** Enjoy cottage cheese as a satisfying snack, elevating it with a sprinkle of nuts or berries for added flavour and nutrients.
- **Salads:** Top your salads with cottage cheese for an extra protein boost, or use it as a base for a salad dressing with lots of herbs and spices to add flavour.
- **Desserts:** Make keto-friendly cheesecakes and creamy desserts using cottage cheese as a base.

COTTAGE CHEESE FLAPJACKS



KEEP ON TRACK (per flapjack)

FAT	CARBS	PROTEIN
13g	12g	7g

MAKES 6 THICK FLAPJACKS

- 125 g full-cream smooth cottage cheese
- 2 large eggs
- 60 g almond flour
- 5 ml (1 tsp) erythritol
- butter, for frying
- honey and blueberries, to serve

1. In a bowl, whisk together the cottage cheese, eggs, almond flour and erythritol until smooth.
2. Heat a pan over medium heat and add a knob of butter. Once the butter has melted, drop in a big spoonful of batter and fry on each side for 1–2 minutes. Repeat with the rest of the batter.
3. Serve warm with honey and blueberries.

8 AFFORDABLE AND WIDELY AVAILABLE

Cottage cheese is a budget-friendly dairy product that is readily available at most grocery stores. Its affordability and accessibility make it an excellent choice if you are looking to make healthier dietary choices on a limited budget. ■