



## Cheesy Herb Torta (Flatbread)

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 40 / **Cook Time** 5 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**coat:** to apply a covering of flour, breadcrumbs, oil, sauce, or batter to food before baking or frying.

**fry:** to cook in a pan in a small amount of fat.

**measure:** to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

**mix:** to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

**rest (dough):** to let bread or pastry dough relax, allowing the dough to absorb more liquid and become more pliable before shaping it.

**season:** to add flavor to food with spices, herbs, and salt.

### Equipment

- ☐ Skillet
- ☐ Large mixing bowl
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Wooden spoon
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Clean damp dish towel or paper towel
- ☐ Pastry brush to oil skillet
- ☐ Heat-resistant spatula

## Ingredients

### Cheesy Herb Torta (Flatbread)

- ☐ 4 C all-purpose flour + more for dusting **\*\* (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)\*\***
- ☐ 1 tsp baking powder
- ☐ 1 tsp salt
- ☐ 2 C plain yogurt **\*\* (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt)\*\***
- ☐ 1 C shredded Monterey Jack cheese **\*\* (Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese)\*\***
- ☐ fresh or dried herbs to knead into dough
- ☐ extra virgin olive oil (or vegetable oil **\*\***) for brushing on dough and cooking

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Cheesy Herb Torta (Flatbread)

**Gluten/Wheat:** Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

**Dairy:** Substitute dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt. Omit Monterey Jack cheese or substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds.

**Soy:** Use extra virgin olive oil or substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil for vegetable oil.

## Instructions

### Cheesy Herb Torta (Flatbread)

#### measure + mix + knead

Have kids mix together **4 cups flour**, **1 teaspoon baking powder**, and **1 teaspoon salt** into a large bowl. Stir in **2 cups of plain yogurt** until the dough is too stiff for a spoon, then knead it in the bowl until it holds together well, adding more flour if necessary. Have kids add **1 cup of shredded Monterey Jack cheese** to the dough.

#### knead + season + rest

Turn dough out on a floured surface and cut into pieces for each kid. Have kids continue kneading their dough for about 5 minutes until the dough feels smooth and elastic. Have them add any fresh or dried herbs as they wish. Roll the dough into balls and put the dough balls in an oiled bowl covered with a clean damp dish towel, setting them aside to rest at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes.

### coat + press

Coat each dough ball in olive oil. Give each child a dough ball and have them press the dough into flat round disks, less than 1/4-inch thick. The thinner the better!

### brush + fry

Brush some oil on a hot skillet or griddle on your stove. Lay the flattened dough balls on the hot skillet and cook them over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes. They will puff up in places or all over, and there may be some blackish-brown spots on the bottom, which is totally okay. Slide a spatula under the flatbreads and flip them, for 1 to 2 minutes, just till it finishes puffing up into a balloon and begins to color lightly on top. Fit as many bread disks as you can in the skillet. Serve with salad or soup, like our **Glorious Garden Gazpacho with Corn Relish**.

## Featured Ingredient: Cheese!

Hi! I'm Cheese!

"People all over the world love to eat cheese! There are so many varieties you may only be able to taste some of them. Try me sliced on crackers or grated and melted in a cheese sauce for nachos, veggies, or mac and cheese. Pizza isn't the same without me, and a grilled cheese sandwich is perfectly gooey and delicious!"

### History & Etymology

Cheese is a dairy by-product of curdling milk. Cheese can be made from the milk of cows, goats, sheep, water buffalo, donkeys, horses, yaks, and even camels and reindeer! Cow's milk is most often used, primarily because there are many more of them, and they produce larger amounts of milk.

Cheese was discovered by accident! More than 7,000 years ago, ancient people discovered cheese by carrying milk in the stomach linings of animals, which had the bacteria rennet, creating curds and whey. There are almost 2,000 varieties of cheese. The United States produces the most cheese, followed by Germany and France. The US isn't the biggest consumer of cheese, though. That honor belongs to France. Most of the cheese in the US is produced in the state of Wisconsin. Plymouth, Wisconsin, bills itself as the Cheese Capital of the World. Wisconsin produces 3.5 billion pounds every year!

National Cheese Day is June 4. Macaroni and cheese is the most popular cheese dish in the United States. Pule cheese is the most expensive worldwide. It is made with the milk of endangered Balkan donkeys from the Zasavica Special Nature Reserve in Serbia. The cheese consists of 60 percent donkey milk and 40 percent goat milk.

According to Guinness World Records, the record for the largest cheese went to a Canadian producer, Agrapour, on September 7, 1995. It weighed 57,518 pounds! It was made from at least 540,000 gallons of milk!

The word "cheese" comes from the Old English "cēse," from the Latin "caseus," from which we also get the word "casein," the main protein in milk.

## How Cheese is Made

Bacteria are added to milk to convert the lactose (milk sugar) into lactic acid, and then an enzyme is added, curdling the milk. This enzyme is called rennet, which used to be taken from the stomachs of young cows but is now found in genetically engineered bacteria and yeast. It takes about 10 pounds of milk to make just one pound of cheese, though this ratio can vary depending on the type of milk.

The first industrial cheese factory began in 1815 in Switzerland. The first large-scale cheese production started in 1851, when a farmer in Rome, New York, with milk from neighboring farms, began producing cheese using an assembly-line method.

Cheddar cheese is not naturally orange. All cheese is naturally white, off-white, or golden yellow, depending on the milk used to make it. Annatto is added to get the orange color of cheddar cheese. It is a natural food coloring made from the seeds of the tropical achiote tree.

Mold is a feature of three categories of cheeses: soft-ripened, washed-rind or spear-ripened, and blue. Soft-ripened cheeses, including Brie and Camembert, have a white mold growing on the outside of the soft cheese.

Washed-rind and spear-ripened cheeses are cured with saltwater brine or mold-bearing agents like beer, wine, brandy, and spices. The bacteria can produce strong flavors and a firm rind around a hard washed-rind cheese, like Appenzeller (Switzerland-cow's milk). Spear-ripened cheeses are typically soft or semi-soft cheeses. They may have a pink or orange rind, including Limburger (area of Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany-cow's milk), Munster (France-cow's milk), and Port Salut (France-cow's milk).

Blue cheeses are created by injecting mold into cheese, either *Penicillium roqueforti* or *Penicillium glaucum*, giving these cheeses their distinct blue veins. Examples of blue cheeses are Gorgonzola (Italy-cow's milk), Roquefort (France-sheep's milk), and Stilton (England-cow's milk).

## How to Buy & Eat

Cheese can be purchased in cheese shops, grocery stores, and farmers' markets. Cheese shops and some grocery stores have a dedicated section or cheese counter where staff can help you learn about cheeses you may be unfamiliar with and help you choose one or more for a specific meal or occasion. You may also be able to taste samples. You can purchase cheese in blocks, loaves, wheels, or pre-shredded.

A person who sells cheese and is likely an expert in the subject is called a "cheesemonger."

Soft cheeses include France's Brie (cow's or goat's milk), Camembert (cow's milk), and Neufchâtel (cow's milk). Soft cheeses mature for less than a month. Cottage cheese and cream cheese are not aged at all.

Semi-soft cheeses are high in moisture content. They may be mild in flavor or pungent, depending on their age. Examples of semi-soft cheeses are Feta (Greece-sheep's or goat's milk), Fontina (Italy-cow's milk), Havarti (Denmark-cow's milk), Munster (France-cow's milk), Mozzarella (Italy-cow's or Italian buffalo's milk).

Semi-hard cheeses include Cheddar (England-cow's or goat's milk), Gouda (Netherlands-cow's or goat's

milk), Monterey Jack (US-California-cows' milk), and Roquefort (France-sheep's milk).

Hard cheeses are matured for months or years. These include Italy's Parmesan (cow's milk) and Pecorino Romano (sheep's milk), and Switzerland's Gruyère (cow's milk).

Cheddar and Gruyère cheeses work well with macaroni and cheese and grilled cheese sandwiches because they melt easily. Mozzarella cheese is typically put on pizzas, although you can also find pizzas with cheddar, feta, fontina, Gouda, or Muenster (the American version of Munster). Some pizza eaters only want cheese on their pizzas and nothing else!

Cheese boards have become popular for serving at both elegant and casual parties. A good cheese board will include a wide selection of cheeses of all types; fresh fruit, like sliced apples, berries, or grapes; bread or crackers; and nuts.

## Nutrition

Dairy cheese is rich in calcium and protein but may also be high in saturated fat and sodium. Consuming a moderate amount of cheese can contribute to a healthful diet, especially when combined with vegetables and whole grains.

One-half cup of full-fat (4 percent) cottage cheese has more protein and less saturated fat and sodium than a one-ounce wedge of many hard cheeses. You can also find low- or reduced-fat versions of some cheeses. The amount of vitamins depends on the type of cheese, but cheese generally has good amounts of vitamins A, B12, and other B vitamins. Besides calcium, it is also a good source of the minerals phosphorus, selenium, and zinc.

Most cheese is made from pasteurized milk. Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria. Cheese made from raw milk is not recommended due to the risk of dangerous bacterial infections.