



MAKE YOUR OWN

You could probably whip up a quick batch of cheese with the things you have in your kitchen right now. The key to great cheese is the quality of the milk. So, try to get the kind of milk that has an enticingly thick layer of cream at the top of the bottle.

Many Bengalis make their own paneer at home on a regular basis. The process requires a series of steps from heating, adding lemon, separating the curd from the whey, and proper kneading for the final cheese. Even European cheeses such as mozzarella can be made by proper heating of the mixture of milk and citric acid, addition of rennet and by making the curds.

Once you have mastered the simple cheeses, you can easily move on to more complex ones with a little bit of help from the internet. Websites such as cheese.com, culture and cheesemaking.com are some of perfectly "cheesy" websites to improve your cheese knowledge and really make you a pro!

according to its salt content. Paneer can be heated a bit to make it an excellent side dish for rice, especially for those days when the usual curries are a bore. With palakpaneer and paneertikka being hot favourites, this cheese is indeed a staple in Indian cuisine. Other than that, you can also use it in sandwiches and burgers. In fact, you can even grill it because of its spongy-rubber texture.

Many local bakeries sell their home-made paneer; the ones especially from Austagram in Kishoreganj are a hot favourite among consumers. Creamier in taste, these are a must have for local cheese lovers!

If you are particular about hygiene, you can try Pran Dhaka cheese, or the ones found in departmental chain stores.

MOZZARELLA

You can basically call this traditional Southern Italian vegetarian cheese. Traditionally made from Italian buffalo milk, Bangladesh now makes its own mozzarella, thus making the product available to the locals at a cheaper price. Ejab group is one of the local producers of good mozzarella, with its factory in Thakurgaon. With

an elastic texture and a pleasant aroma, it is perfect for pastas, lasagne, and other Italian delicacies. Sold in chunks, you can find them in supermarkets and departmental stores.

KISAN CHEESE

Kisan cheese is a hot favourite among the Bangladeshi cheese lovers. Manufactured in Kuliarchar, and sold at Tk 230 per chunk in supermarkets and departmental stores, this is a versatile ingredient for cooking. The cheese melts really easily, and is perfect for lasagne. You can even slice it up, and use it to make sandwiches or burgers or just as an addition to your crackers for an evening snack. The beauty of Kisan cheese lies in its fresh aroma, and its deliciousness both in melted and solid form.

Cheese is not only tasty, but the local variety is easy to handle even for kitchen novices, a good source of protein, calcium, phosphorous, zinc and vitamins, and hence is not "junk food". So next time you lust after some fresh and soft cheese, have a go at it without guilt!

By Adiba Mahub Prama
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

