

# HISTORY OF CHEESE

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According to ancient records passed down through the centuries, the making of cheese dates back more than 4,000 years.

No one really knows who made the first cheese. According to an ancient legend, \*it was made accidentally (1.7) by an Arabian merchant who put his

supply of milk into a pouch made from a sheep's stomach, as he set out on a day's journey across the desert. The rennet in the lining of the pouch, combined with the heat of the sun, caused the milk to separate into curd and whey. That night he found that the whey satisfied his thirst, and the cheese (curd) had a delightful flavor which satisfied his hunger.

Travelers from Asia are believed to have brought the art of cheesemaking to Europe. In fact, cheese was made in many parts of the Roman Empire when it was at its height. The Romans, in turn, introduced cheesemaking to England. During the Middle Ages-from the decline of the Roman Empire until the discovery of America-cheese was made and improved by the monks in the monasteries of Europe. Cheesemaking continued to flourish in Europe and became an established food. In fact, cheese was included in the voyages supplies to America in 1620. The making of cheese quickly spread in the New World.

As the population across the United States continued to grow dramatically, the demand for cheese increased and the industry gradually flourished too.

The wholesale cheese industry was thus born and showed phenomenal growth during the latter half of the 1800s. By the turn of the century, farm production of cheese had become insignificant. As cheese demand continued to grow and spread rapidly,

manufactured and processed cheese production increased dramatically. Currently, more than one-third of all milk produced each year in the U.S. is used to manufacture cheese.

As consumer appetites for all types of cheese continue to expand, so will the industry.

### **Glossary:**

- **pouch:** a small flexible bag, typically carried in a pocket or attached to a belt.
- **rennet:** a substance used for making milk thicker, especially to make cheese. (cuajo)
- **lining:** a layer of different material covering the inside surface of something.
- **curd:** the thickened or solid part of milk that separates from the whey
- **whey:** the watery part of milk that remains after the formation of curds.
- **thirst:** a feeling of needing or wanting to drink something.
- **monk:** a member of a religious community of men typically living under vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

### **Read the text and complete the activities.**

1. “It” in line 7 refers to:  
A. the first cheese  
B. the first cheese maker  
C. an old story  
D. a legend
2. According to the text, the history of cheese...  
A. is recorded in history books  
B. didn’t really happen  
C. is a story that might be true
3. The word ‘merchant’ means  
A. market  
B. trader  
C. marketing

4. Which of the following did not contribute to making the first cheese?

- A. The Arabian merchant's camel was moving across the desert.
- B. There were chemicals in the bag in which the milk was carried.
- C. The weather was hot

5. The Arab merchant probably...

- A. knew how to make cheese.
- B. had made cheese many times.
- C. didn't have a clue about cheese making.
- D. traded cheese in the dessert.

6. Cheese was brought to Europe by the \_\_\_\_\_ and to America by the \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Cheese was improved by the \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Find in the text:

- A. examples of adverbs
- B. examples of passive voice
- C. three regular verbs in the past
- D. three irregular verbs in the past
- E. a synonym for: ~old ~provision ~delicious ~at its peak ~fast ~prospered

*Adapted from <https://www.idfa.org/history-of-cheese>*