

INGREDIENT of the MONTH

Havarti

Havarti is a semi-soft cow's-milk cheese. Havarti is smooth, with no rind, and creamy to pale yellow in color. It has small irregular holes in it known sometimes as "eyes." It has a buttery aroma with subtle sweet and acidic notes. Havarti is an interior-ripened cheese and the typical aging process lasts for around three months.

Hanne Nielsen created Havarti in the 1800s. She had traveled around Europe to learn cheesemaking techniques. Upon returning to her husband's farm in Denmark, she experimented with washing her curds in fresh spring water before pressing them into cheese molds and draining them. This technique resulted in a soft, creamy, new cheese that she named after her farm, Havarthigaard. Within a few years, Nielsen was sending her butter and cheese to the Danish king and queen; the rest she would sell in her shop in Copenhagen. Danish cheesemakers eventually brought the style of cheese to Wisconsin, where a number of creameries craft award-winning versions.

While cheeses tend to be high in sodium and saturated fats, they are also a good source of calcium. As it relates to nutrition, cheese is essentially concentrated milk. For this reason, it takes about 200 grams or 7.1 oz. of milk to provide that much protein, and 150 grams or 5.3 oz. to equal the calcium.

HEALTHY INGREDIENT CONTRIBUTION

Values from NutritionData.com based on rose hips, wild (Norther Plain Indians) 1 ounce (28g)

CALCIUM Havarti, like many cheeses and milks, contains a lot of calcium. Calcium is important for strong bones. One serving of Havarti is 30 percent of the daily-recommended value of calcium.

VITAMIN A One serving of Havarti is 12.2 percent of the daily-recommended value of vitamin A. Vitamin A is essential for vision because it is needed for the retina. It also acts as a growth factor for many cells.

PROTEIN One serving of Havarti is 13.2 percent of the daily-recommended value of calcium. Protein is an important macronutrient for the building blocks of the body. The body uses protein to build and repair tissues, make enzymes and hormones, and build muscle and skin.

POTASSIUM Havarti cheese is a good source of potassium. Potassium can help lower blood pressure and is important in brain function. One serving of Havarti is 2 percent of the daily-recommended value of potassium.

IRON One serving of Havarti is 1.4 percent of the daily-recommended value of iron. Iron is an essential mineral that carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. Without enough oxygen the body becomes fatigued which results in decreased brain function and a weaker immune system.



TYPES AND VARIETIES

- **ORIGINAL** The original version of Havarti is made with whole, pasteurized cow's milk. Depending on the desired flavor and texture it may spend anywhere from a few months to a year aging. Whereas cream Havarti ripens very little.
- **CREAM** "Flødehavarti" or cream Havarti has been enriched with extra cream to bring the butterfat up to what the French would call a "double crème" (think Brie). Cream Havarti has a smooth melt in your mouth texture and is available with different flavors such as caraway, dill, cranberry, garlic, basil, coconut, and red pepper.

SELECTING AND STORING

- Some experts state that wrapping cheese in cheese paper provides optimal storing results. Wrapping your cheese in any type of plastic prevents it from breathing and builds up too much moisture. If wrapping your cheese in aluminum foil, you should make sure to leave room for it to breathe.
- When storing cheese, the temperature should be the same as which it was cured. For most cheeses 40-45°F will keep them fresh for a few weeks.
- Look for any cracks that could indicate dry air, and if you smell any odor of ammonia, it could be a sign that it is time to throw your cheese away.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Today, Havarti Cheese is a staple in Danish cuisine.
- The very first factory for the industrial production of cheese opened in Switzerland in 1815. However, large-scale production was first successful in the United States.
- National Cheese Day is celebrated on June 4th.

CULINARY USES

- When creating a cheeseboard, Havarti is best served at room temperature and paired with Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc or light bodied Pinot Noir.
- If you are serving a cheese board as a meal, it is recommend to serve 7-8 ounces per person
- Havarti melts well onto burgers, bread for grilled cheese sandwiches, or even into a sauce for pasta dishes and fondue.
- Havarti can be substituted for other cheese in baked dishes like Scalloped Potatoes, Lasagna or Ratatouille.

