

What to do with all that whey!

Yes – you’ve made cheese and now it’s time to reap the benefits of the nutritious and delicious Whey that you have.

Here are just a few things that you can do with your whey to keep you and your family happy and healthy over your cheese making career.

So, as you’ve done my workshop you know what whey is – it’s the milk with the fats and solids pulled out (the solids are now in your cheese). It’s primarily water but also contains lactose (milk sugar) which is water soluble and ends up draining off with the whey - for the lactose-intolerant, beware.

However, the most valuable ingredient in whey is the whey protein. Milk contains two types of protein - casein and whey proteins. Most of the casein ends up in your cheese and most of the whey protein ends up in the whey, as you would guess based on the name.

The end use depends upon whether the whey is salted or not and there are way more options for the unsalted variety but here are some general ideas:

Salted:

- Super Rich Homemade Stock- Save up your bones and/or veggie trimmings (you can keep them in the freezer for a few weeks until you have enough). When you have what you need, cover the bones and trimmings with whey instead of water, bring to a boil then simmer on low a couple of hours to extract the flavor. Strain out the bones and trimmings and reduce the liquid until it's about half or even a third of its starting volume. Be sure to taste it for salt since reducing it will increase the saltiness.
- Freeze in ice cube trays and use as needed in place of bouillon or stock. DELICIOUS!
- Baking - Use in place of water or milk in bread or pastry recipes. Be sure to omit the salt. This is an amazing replacement in bread and scone baking!

Unsalted:

- Protein Shakes and Smoothies - Add a little to your shakes and smoothies for a protein boost.
- Powdery Mildew Assistance- If you're a gardener, especially near the coast or in wet climates, you've battled powdery mildew, that icky whitish-gray powder that settles on your cucumber, pea and squash leaves. No need to buy expensive treatments at the garden store - spray on some whey and the acidity will change the pH of the leaves, discouraging powdery mildew.
- Nitrogen Supplement for the Garden - Whey is not only full of protein - it's full of nitrogen! Bad news for big companies that need to discard tens of thousands of gallons of whey but great news for the cheesemaker who is also a home gardener. Small scale wins again.
- Lower Garden Soil pH - Do you grow plants that prefer soil with a higher acidity like blueberries or tomatoes? Strain your whey incredibly well with doubled up cheese cloth or butter muslin then pour it into the soil. The acidity will benefit your plants!
- Lacto-Fermentation - If you love fermented goods like I do, you might appreciate the ability to speed up the process that whey gives you. Instead of adding salt to produce you intend to ferment, you just add the whey - fermentation will occur much more quickly than you're accustomed to so keep an eye on it. You can add salt to taste if you like. Make sure the whey you're using is from cultured cheese like the Feta we've made.
- Feed to the Animals - Obviously not everyone can take advantage of this use, but we mix whey in with feed for our backyard chickens for a protein boost. It's especially useful during moulting when they need a little extra protein. Unfortunately, there isn't much calcium left in whey, as it's all helping to maintain the structure of your cheese at this point. I've heard of people feeding whey to their dogs as well, though we do not - I suspect that, like milk, it's not advisable to feed whey to adult cats.
- Drink Up! - The acidic tang of whey may be a bit of an acquired taste but I actually find it refreshing. Cultured whey has pro-biotics that can help balance the microflora in your gut as an extra bonus to the protein. (see Booze it Up below)
- Bathe in It? - it softens your skin like nothing else. Some of the students who have taken my cheese making workshops told me it made their hair super soft. Worth a try! Though I would add some essential oils in so you don't smell too much like cheese!

- Ricotta – As you know – making ricotta from the whey is super easy now that I've shown you how to do it.
- Freeze for later - You can always freeze your whey for later. I recommend splitting it into smaller, manageable batches and freezing separately. It will keep in the freezer for up to 6 months.
- Soak Grains. I soak our oats for porridge in the whey – it tastes delicious
- Soak Beans and nuts – Just like grains, your digestive system benefits from beans and nuts being soaked. Beans to eliminate enzymes that inhibit digestion and the nuts for activation.
- Make a face mask – use whey combined with raw honey for an easy face mask that leaves your skin feeling ultra soft – your skin will love you! Combine equal amounts of whey with Manuka honey, leave on your face for 15 minutes, enjoy a glass of wine then wash off.
- Pet food – add the whey to your pet food to enhance their diet – I promise – they'll love it!
- Make rice - Although the heat will kill some of the live enzymes you will still retain the nutrients that the rice absorbs
- Bone broth-substitute whey for apple cider vinegar when making bone broths
- Substite for buttermilk - anything that has buttermilk in the recipe – you guessed it – you can use the whey – isn't this great!
- Thicken Gravy - If you're making gravy why not make it a healthy option and boost the nutrition by adding whey instead of water
- Sustiuture for Lemon Juice - Whey tastes a lot like lemon juice so it makes a great substitution.
- Use in a Salad Dressing - Instead of a vinaigrette with lemon juice – use whey!
- Tenderise Meat - Swap the whey for any vinegar in a traditional marinade
- Make Lemonade – yep – you heard me right – here is the recipe - [Probiotic Lemonade](#)
- Use it as a brine – Brine your poultry and pork with whey