

# Ghee

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**Ghee** is a class of clarified butter that originated in South Asia and is commonly used in South Asian (Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepali and Pakistani) cuisine.

## Preparation

Ghee is made by simmering unsalted butter in a cooking vessel until all water has boiled off, the milk solids (or protein) have settled to the bottom, and a froth has floated on top. After removing the froth, the cooked and clarified butter is then spooned off or tipped out carefully to avoid disturbing the milk solids on the bottom of the pan.<sup>[]</sup> Ghee can be stored for extended periods without refrigeration, provided that it is kept in an airtight container to prevent oxidation and remains moisture-free. The texture, color, or taste of ghee depends on the source of the milk from which the butter was made and the extent of boiling and simmering.

## Usage in food

Ghee is widely used in Indian cuisine. However, it is mentioned in the Epic of Gilgamesh, and is probably Akkadian in origin. In many parts of India and Pakistan, especially in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bengal, Orissa and many other states, rice is traditionally prepared or served with ghee (including biryani).<sup>*[citation needed]*</sup> In the Bharuch district of Gujarat, Ghee is served with kichdi, usually an evening meal of yellow rice with curry, a sauce made from yoghurt, cumin seeds, kari leaves, ghee, cornflour, tumeric, garlic and salt. Ghee is also an ingredient as well as used in the preparation of kadhi and used in Indian and Pakistani sweets such as Mysore pak, and different varieties of halva and laddu. Punjabi cuisine prepared in restaurants uses large amounts of ghee. Naan and roti are sometimes brushed with ghee, either during preparation or while serving.

Ghee is an ideal fat for deep frying because its smoke point (where its molecules begin to break down) is 250 °C (482 °F), which is well above typical cooking temperatures of around 200 °C (392 °F) and above that of most vegetable oils.

## Nutrition

Like any clarified butter, ghee is composed almost entirely of fat; the nutrition facts label found on bottled cow's ghee produced in the USA indicates eight mg. of cholesterol per teaspoon.

Ghee has been shown to slightly, but not significantly, reduce serum cholesterol in one rodent study.<sup>[4]</sup> Studies in Wistar rats have revealed one mechanism by which ghee reduces plasma LDL cholesterol. This action is mediated by an increased secretion of biliary lipids.

Indian restaurants and some households may use hydrogenated vegetable oil (also known as vanaspati, dalda, or "vegetable ghee") in place of ghee due to its lower cost. This "vegetable ghee" may contain trans fat. Trans fats are increasingly linked to serious chronic health conditions. The term shuddh ghee, however, is not officially enforced in many regions, so partially hydrogenated oils are marketed as pure ghee in some areas. Where this is illegal in India, law enforcement often cracks down on the sale of fake ghee.<sup>[4]</sup> Ghee is also sometimes called desi (country-made) ghee or asli (genuine) ghee to distinguish it from "vegetable ghee."

## References

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