

How to Buy

BUTTER



United States
Department of
Agriculture

PREPARED BY
Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Home and
Garden Bulletin
Number 257

How to Buy BUTTER

Most consumers buy butter because they like the taste of it...whether it's on a hot roll or used to enhance the flavor of a variety of other foods.

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Points to Consider

Wholesomeness...quality...nutritive value...taste...and informative labeling are some of the points to consider when purchasing butter.

Wholesomeness

Only butter manufactured in a plant approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for sanitation and good operating practices can be graded. Plant approval is obtained through official inspection of the plant's premises, facilities, equipment, and procedures. USDA inspects the entire packaging operation, with the final step being the careful grading of the butter before it is ready for sale.

Nutritive Value

Butter is high in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories, and has few vitamins and minerals. One tablespoon of butter contains 12 grams total fat, 7 grams saturated fatty acids, 31 milligrams cholesterol, and 100 calories. Use the *Nutrition Facts* panel on each individual product label to learn about the nutrient content of that food and how it fits into an overall daily diet.

Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol to help reduce the risk of getting certain diseases and to help maintain a healthy weight. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest choosing a diet containing 30 percent or less of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fatty acids. Also, some health authorities suggest that dietary cholesterol be limited to an average of 300 milligrams or less per day.

USDA nutritionists recommend that all fats, including butter, be used sparingly.

Tips: Go easy on the amount of butter added to foods during cooking or at the table. When you choose butter, balance your fat intake by choosing other foods that are low in fat.

Quality Assurance

Butter can only enhance the flavor of your favorite foods if it's of high quality. And, the way to be assured of this quality is to look for the USDA grade shield on the package.

The USDA grade shield (AA, A, or B) means that the butter has been evaluated by experienced USDA graders and that it has been produced in an approved plant under exacting sanitary conditions. Butter grading is provided to manufacturers by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service on a voluntary, fee-for-service basis.

Using USDA's Butter Grades

The U.S. grade shield is usually found on the main panel of the butter package, but may be shown on the side or end panel. U.S. Grade AA and Grade A are the quality ratings most often seen. However, U.S. Grade B butter is also sold in some areas. Choose the quality of butter to suit the intended use or your personal preference. Here is what the official USDA quality grades mean:

■ U.S. Grade AA Butter

Delicate, sweet flavor, with a fine, highly pleasing aroma
Made from high-quality fresh, sweet cream
Smooth, creamy texture with good "spreadability"

■ U.S. Grade A Butter

Pleasing flavor
Made from fresh cream
Fairly smooth texture
Rates close to top grade

■ U.S. Grade B Butter

May have slightly acid flavor
Readily acceptable to many
consumers

Earning the Grade Shield

The USDA grade shield is a reliable guide to butter quality. To earn the right to use this shield, a manufacturing plant must meet exacting requirements. All butter bearing the shield has been checked by a Federal grader. The grader judges the quality on the basis of official written standards which set forth the requirements for each grade. Also, tests are run on the butter's "keeping quality" as a check for wholesomeness.

How to Store

Because of its delicate flavor and aroma, butter is sensitive to strong-flavored foods. To keep butter at peak quality, follow these simple hints:

- Store in original protective wrapping or container until ready for use.
- Freeze butter not intended for use within 2 or 3 days. Frozen butter will maintain its quality for 2 months.
- For "ready spreadability" keep a few days' supply in the regular portion of the refrigerator. Remove 10 to 15 minutes before use.

How to Use

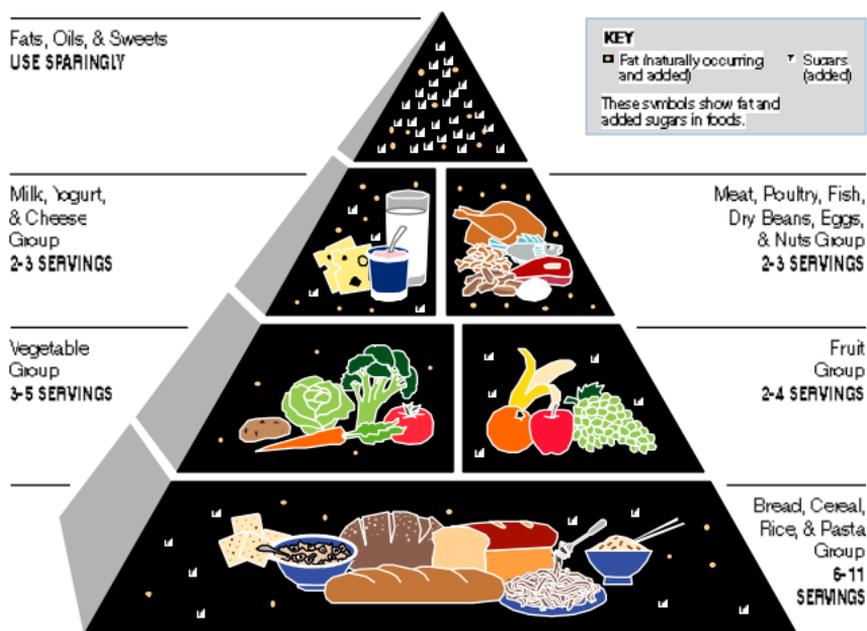
- To cut butter cleanly, cover knife blade with waxed paper.
- Butter thinly spread into a sandwich adds to the moisture and flavor, and keeps the filling from soaking into the bread.

When buying butter, read the label, and look for...

- the U.S. grade mark, your assurance of quality;
- the product's net weight; and
- the name of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor.

For more information about nutrition, write:
 U.S. Department of Agriculture,
 Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 200 North
 Washington, DC 20036

Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Use the Food Guide Pyramid to help you eat better every day...the Dietary Guidelines way. Start with plenty of Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta; Vegetables; and Fruits. Add two to three servings from the Milk group and two to three servings from the Meat group. Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. No one food group is more important than another - for good health you need them all. Go easy on the fats, oils, and sweets, the foods in the small tip of the Pyramid.

The "Food Guide Pyramid" booklet (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Human Nutrition Information Service, August 1992, Leaflet No. 572) can be purchased. Send a \$1 check or money order, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, to Consumer Information Center, Department 117-B, Pueblo, CO 81009.

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■ QUALITY

U.S. Grade AA: Highly pleasing flavor and aroma



U.S. Grade A: Almost as good as USDA Grade AA



U.S. Grade B: Slight acid flavor; preferred by some consumers.

■ WHOLESOMENESS

Butter bearing the USDA grade shield must be produced in a sanitary plant approved by USDA.

This pamphlet supersedes:
HOW TO BUY BUTTER
Home and Garden Bulletin 148
Agricultural Marketing Service
March 1968
Issue date: February 1995