

Businessweek | Economics

The Average American Eats 42 Pounds of Cheese a Year, and That Number Could Go Up

Dairy processors are planning facilities across the US to meet surging demand.

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September 6, 2024 at 5:00 AM CDT



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Is there such a thing as too much cheese? Producers across the US are betting billions of dollars that the answer is no. America's per capita cheese consumption has more than doubled since the government began keeping track in 1975, to about 42 pounds a year—more than all the butter, ice cream and yogurt combined. Facilities for making cheese account for more than half of the \$8 billion in US dairy-product projects slated to come online from 2023 to 2026, according to the [International Dairy Foods](#)

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The pandemic accelerated cheese's ascent. When restaurants shut down, home cooks tried to re-create their favorite dishes, complete with piles of cheese. Others found increased opportunities to indulge while working 10 feet from the fridge. In fact, CoBank [estimates](#) cheese snacks are now worth \$75 billion a year worldwide. The most traditional cheeses only have four