

USA Cheese Powers Culinary Innovation as Southeast Asia's Foodservice Sector Aligns to Consumer Demands

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Imports of Cheese from the USA into Southeast Asia have surged over the past year, rising 43 per cent in volume to reach \$106 million in value. This growth reflects the region's growing appetite for cheese. Notably, grated and powdered cheeses recorded the highest growth at 77 per cent year-on-year, underscoring strong demand from the foodservice sector.

This momentum is reflected by consumer preferences across the region. According to USDEC's custom consumption tracker for Southeast Asia, cheese is widely consumed among mid- to high-income consumers, with 9 in 10 respondents stating they have eaten cheese in the past 12 months, whether through retail or foodservice. Across both categories, taste and enjoyment are the primary drivers of consumption.

These trends signal significant opportunities in menu innovation for chefs and restaurant operators. As more cheese-based recipes go viral on social media, consumers' awareness of cheese continues to expand, transforming it from a supporting ingredient into a foundation for creativity.

"The U.S. Dairy Export Council remains committed to supporting the region with high-quality, versatile dairy solutions. Through Cheese from the USA, we are empowering chefs to push boundaries, rethink familiar formats, and shape the future of culinary innovation in Southeast Asia," said Dali Ghazalay, Regional Director - Southeast Asia, USDEC SEA.