



Milk

Milk History in Canada

Dairy farming started in Canada in the early 1600s, when French settlers brought in dairy cattle. At that time, dairy products were provided to towns by local farmers. In 1850 the modern factory method of cheese making was introduced, and the first cheese factories were built in Canada in 1864 (Ontario) and 1865 (Quebec). Milk and dairy production have drastically changed over the years! Milk use to come in returnable glass containers and was delivered from door to door. Today most products come in plastic packaging and are found in grocery stores.

Milk: from farm to table

Everyone knows that dairy milk comes from cows. But there are some important steps between the farm and your fridge. Here's how it all happens.

A farmer's day begins with feeding the dairy cows a mixture of forage (pasture, silage or dry hay), barley, corn or soy grains, plus vitamin and mineral supplements. In Canada, cows are not given antibiotics or growth hormones. To protect cows, every farm is thoroughly regulated to keep bad bacteria out and maintain quality milk standards. Farmers also try to be as sustainable as possible to help protect the environment.

Milk is inspected before it's pumped into insulated, stainless steel tanker trucks and shipped to a processing plant. If it doesn't pass inspection, it gets rejected and dumped.

At the processing plant, the milk is tested again for quality assurance. All varieties of milk start from the same tank of raw milk.



The first step is to separate the naturally occurring fat and then add it back in the appropriate amount for each variety. The milk then needs to be pasteurized and homogenized to ensure it's free from bacteria.

The milk is now ready to be packaged in cartons and bags. Once the containers are sealed, they're stacked in cold storage rooms, ready to be delivered to stores in refrigerated trucks. While there are a lot of steps to the process, it usually takes less than a day from start to finish.

The Dairy Farmers of Canada have created a short video (3.30 minutes) to show the movement of milk from the cow on a Canadian farm to the grocery store. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fEnWkCF6bg>.

Did you know?

- Ontario dairy farms produce 2.5 billion litres of milk every year. That's enough to fill 1,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.
- Milk is a natural and pure product. The use of growth hormones is illegal in Canada. Nothing is added to milk except vitamins A and D.
- An average dairy cow weighs 1,200 pounds or 545 kilograms.
- A cup of 2% cow's milk contains 15 nutrients that are essential for health, including calcium (302 mg), vitamin D (2.8 mcg) and protein (9g).

Joke Corner

Q: What is as big as a cow but weighs nothing? A: His shadow
Q: What gives milk and has a horn? A: A milk truck

Science Activity

Check out this colour changing milk experiment from Science Teachers Association of Ontario: <https://stao.ca/colour-changing-milk-experiments-steve-spangler-science/> or watch the video of this experiment here: <https://science-u.org/experiments/magic-milk.html>

Creamy Smoothie Recipe

from Health Canada

INGREDIENTS

- 500 mL (2 cups) loosely packed spinach or any other leafy green
- 1 ripe banana
- 500 mL (2 cups) fresh or frozen fruits (blueberries, strawberries, peaches, plums, mangoes or any combination)
- 375 mL (1 ½ cups) milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverage
- 250 mL (1 cup) plain Greek yogurt
- 20 mL (1 ½ tbsp) rolled oats or oat bran



DIRECTIONS

1. In a blender, place all ingredients and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into a glass and serve cold!

<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/recipes/creamy-smoothie/>