

Ghee



Ghee is clarified butter. In the process of making it the water part of ghee evaporates and the milk solids separate out from the fat, leaving us with just the nutrient-rich oils found in butter. Because the water and milk solids are removed you get much more fat (good fats!) per serving than butter. It comes to us by way of India and Ayurvedic medicine and cooking where it has been revered as a medicinal food for millennia. It's a suitable dairy alternative for folks allergic to dairy (although folks should always be cautious trying it the first time if they have a severe dairy allergy) because the milk solids like lactose, which are what cause allergic immune reactions, are strained-out in the process of making it. It has a very high smoke point (485 degrees) making it a wonderful high-heat oil, great for browning aromatic spices for all kinds of dishes, for greasing pans when baking cakes, cookies etc, for frying, sautéing, and can also be substituted for butter in any recipe, including breads, cakes, cookies, and so on. It also makes a delicious swap for butter on bread, on grains, and anywhere else you use butter. There are many health benefits of ghee (see below)!

The Health Benefits of Ghee

- Increases *agni* (can be thought of as your digestive or metabolic fire) and improves nutrient absorption and assimilation
- Nourishes *ojas* (the body's vital energy)
- Strengthens the brain and nervous system
- Lubricates connective tissue and makes the body more flexible
- Carries the medicinal properties of deeper into the tissues of the body (*anupana*/vehicle)
- Rich in Vitamins A, D, and E. Rich in Vit K2 (when sourced from grass-fed cows)
- Suitable for dairy-free folks. The casein (there are only small amount in butter to begin with) and lactose is strained-out
- One of the highest natural sources of CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid) – an antioxidant with anti-viral properties
- Rich in butyric acid, a saturated short-chain fatty acid shown to be anti-inflammatory and to improve gastro-intestinal health (seems to help heal and seal the gut)

Making Your Own Ghee

Ingredients:

1 lb organic unsalted butter
(makes 1 2/3 cups ghee)

When possible make this with grass-fed/pastured butter- I love the Kerrygold brand. Put the butter in a medium-sized pot and heat gently on medium heat until the butter starts to melt, then reduce heat to low. Cook until the butter just starts to boil and continue cooking on this low temperature with the lid off the pan. The butter will start to sputter and foam as it cooks and then start to quiet down. This is the water portion cooking off. In about 12-15 minutes your ghee will start to smell like popcorn and turn a lovely golden color, and whitish curds will form on the top of the golden-colored ghee, which are the milk solids separating from the fat. At this point start watching your ghee very closely to be sure that it doesn't burn! Soon the whitish curds will turn a light brown color and the boiling will quite down, which means that your ghee is ready! *The total cooking time for 1 lb of butter should not be longer than 15-20 minutes.* Remove the pan from the heat and let the ghee cool until it is just warm and the solid curds have settled to the bottom. Strain the ghee through cheesecloth into a clean glass jar. If you want your ghee to have a smooth consistency, then cool it in the fridge. Ghee can be stored un-refrigerated and is said to improve with age. Just be sure that no water comes in contact with your finished ghee product, since this will promote bacterial growth and cause you ghee to go bad! See the pictures below to see what ghee looks like in the different steps of making it!

Making Ghee: A visual guide through the stages of cooking

1.



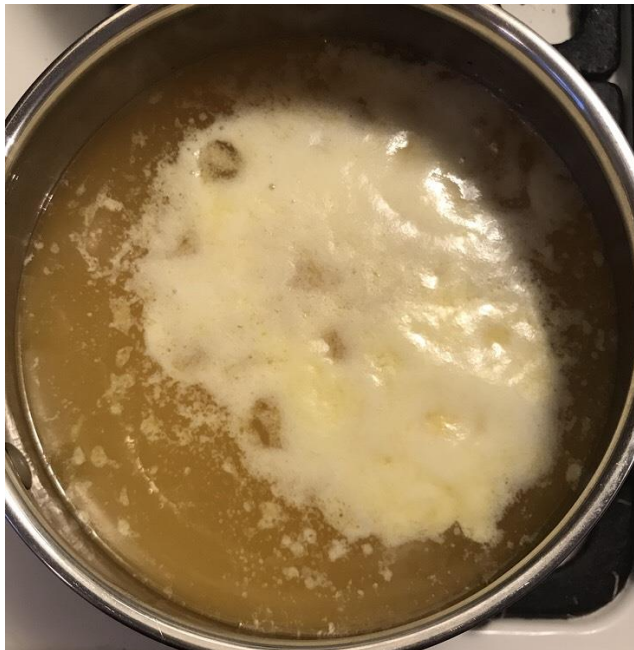
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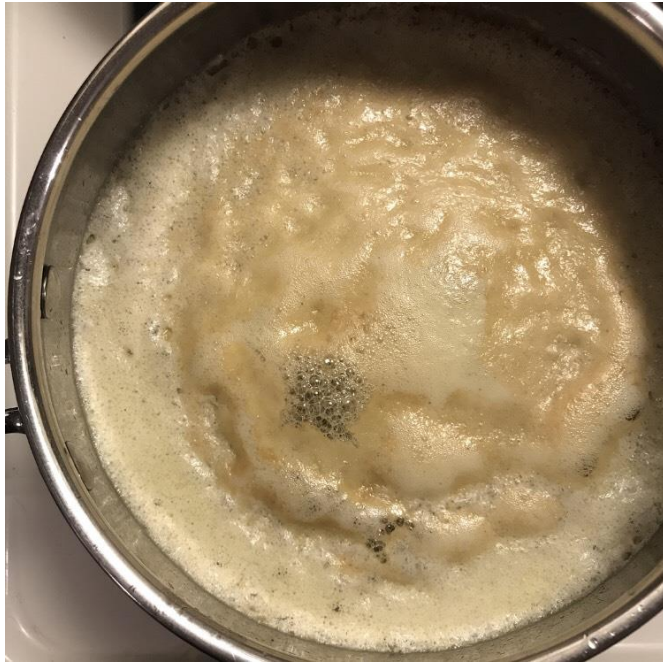
Jade Alicandro Mace, Community Herbalist
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6.



7.



8. (DONE!)



