

## Health Benefits of Ghee, the Indian Clarified Butter

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Ghee is one of the well known variations of clarified butter. It is generally made from the butter derived from cow's milk. This butter is heated gradually after being melted on slow heat. This process continues until the entire water content evaporates. The cooking time of the melted butter is directly proportional to the intensity of the ensuing flavor. Hence, the more the butter is cooked, the better the flavor of the ghee. Subsequently, the butter is left to cool. The ghee then makes the top most layer in the vessel above the melted butter. This is then poured off and the precipitated protein or curd is left behind. This curd is also reasonably rich butterfat and can be used along with buffalo fat to make ghee albeit of inferior quality as compared to the first one.

Ghee has a high smoking point; this means that it does not burn easily while cooking or frying. Moreover, it has a better flavor as compared to butter. This is the reason why most chefs prefer using ghee than butter in cooking.

Ghee is also a good choice for people who are allergic to lactose as the clarifying process eliminates the milk proteins. Since it does not contain hydrogenated oils, and is free from all kinds of preservatives, trans fats and other derivatives, ghee is a preferred choice for people who are health conscious. However, due to the large quantity of saturated fat present in the ghee, it needs to be used sparingly as compared to any other cooking oil or butter. One tablespoon of ghee is equivalent to four tablespoons of butter or cooking oil.

Ghee has been used for centuries in various Ayurvedic remedies for constipation and ulcers. Indians believe that ghee can not only help in enhancing the memory but also work as a great skin softener. Before the advent of topical burn creams, ghee was used to treat blisters and burns. Since it is rich in a number of vitamins, it keeps the skin and the eyes healthy.

Ghee has a number of antioxidants that help in preventing all kinds of ageing related issues. It also acts as a medium for the absorption of all fat-soluble vitamins and helps in fortifying the immune system. Some people even believe that ghee can also prevent the formation of tumors.

On the flip side, it is a well known fact that anything used in excess can cause problems. It is the same case with ghee. Excessive usage of ghee can lead to the formation of cholesterol that in turn can lead to heart problems. Therefore, using moderate amounts of ghee is the best way to avail all the benefits and avoid heart problems and other issues.