

WHAT DOES CHEESE COLOR TELL YOU?

Color can give a clue as to what animal made the milk, the animal's diet, and other ingredients that were added to the cheese

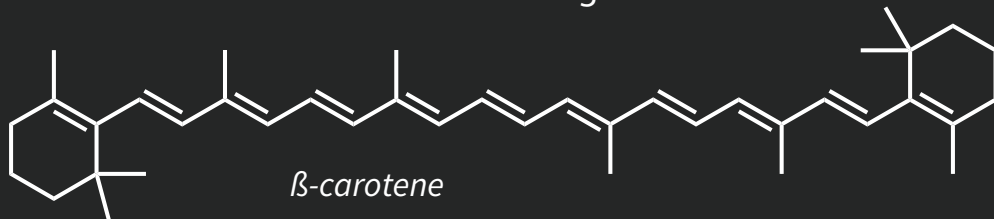
ORANGE

If a cheese is a deep-orange color it has annatto extract added to it. Annatto is a seed from the South American achiote tree. Studies have concluded it doesn't alter flavor by any measureable degree, meaning *all other things being equal* orange cheddar and white cheddar have the same flavor. The main pigment in annatto generating the orange color is norbixin (pictured below).



YELLOW

Many cow and sheep cheeses range from from very pale yellow to very deep yellow in color. This is an indication as to the extent these animals were pasture fed. Grass contains high levels of β -carotene (yellow color), which is deposited in the milkfat during metabolism. Cheeses very pale yellow probably came from animals that didn't feed on grass or contain less fat.



WHITE

If a cheese is very white (snow white, no hint of pale yellow) then good chances are that it is a goat cheese. Goats' digestive processes break down β -carotene (yellow) into colorless vitamin A. This leaves very little β -carotene in the milk, but high levels of vitamin A make it into the cheese.

β -carotene
(yellow)

