**Italian cheeses: types and classification**

The first classification of Italian cheeses is obtained by distinguishing **the sources of milk**. The milk used for production can be **cow's** (e.g., Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano, Asiago, Gorgonzola, Mozzarella, Fontina, **Taleggio**), **sheep's** (e.g., Pecorino), **goat's** (e.g., **Caprino**), **buffalo's** (e.g., **Mozzarella** **di** **Bufala**), or **mixed**.

Next, the **amount** **of** **fat** is considered, resulting in a division into **fatty** **cheeses** (fat content above 42%), **semi-fat** (between 35% and 42%), **light** (between 20% and 35%), and **lean** (below 20%).

Another division is the differentiation based on the **type** **of** **rind**. Some cheeses, for example, fresh cheeses, do not have a rind. The rind can differ in **consistency**, **thickness**, and **color** and can be **natural** or **artificial**.

The final division is **the texture of the cheese**, which depends on the amount of water it contains and the ripening time. Due to the texture, cheeses are classified as **fresh, soft, semi-hard, and hard.**

During the **ripening** stage, the cheese acquires the taste and characteristics characteristic of its species. Ripening can take from a few days to several years.