

An imitation cheese composition containing moisture, preferably in an amount that is at least 60% by weight, a hydrocolloid, a cheese-derived component in an amount less than about 15 % by weight of the composition, cheese flavoring that is natural or artificial and an acidulents in an amount that causes a pH of the composition to be not greater than 4.6. The composition is sufficiently firm such that it can be at least one of sliced, cut, shredded or grated. Preferably, no more than 1% protein is present, and/or the acidulent is in a total titratable amount of less than 1.5% by weight of the composition, resulting in an imitation cheese having a flavor, texture and consistency that was only previously attainable in a pasteurized process cheese product.