Does this formula equal perfect cheese on toast?

By Dora Allday

IT’S a national staple that most home cooks can reliably throw together for quick comfort eating.

But cheese on toast has now been elevated to a higher form by a food scientist who has worked out a precise method for preparing the perfect slice.

The essence of Dr Stuart Farrimond’s formula is that you use 50g (1.8oz) of cheese, cooked exactly 18cm (7in) under the grill.

But there is a lot more to it than that. The first thing to get right is the bread – it must be white, pre-sliced to medium thickness, said the Reading University scientist.

The golden hue of white toast carries most of its flavour, making it tastier than brown, which might be healthier but contains ferulic acid that stops the reaction. Dr Farrimond first toasts the bread on both sides, butters it – right to the edges – then adds cheese before grilling it. The fats in the butter add flavour but also protect the surface of the bread from burning under the grill.

Presenting his process on BBC2’s Inside The Factory programme, he said it was important to use cheddar of mild or medium maturity, grated rather than sliced. Younger varieties are better because the older a cheese is, the tighter its proteins intertwine, meaning they do not soften as quickly. Dr Farrimond said 50g is the optimum amount as too much cheese risks a leathery texture. And he recommends putting it 18cm under the grill to minimise the risk of burning.

Several Twitter users mocked the scientist’s complicated method, with one writing: ‘Grill on, bread under, flip over and cover with cheese, back under grill. None of this toast both sides first nonsense.’

HOW TO MAKE IT...

- Use white bread, pre-sliced to medium thickness
- Toast the bread on both sides
- Butter it right to the edges
- Add 50g (1.8oz) of mild or medium cheddar, grated
- Add a dash of Worcestershire sauce
- Cook 18cm (7in) under the grill