

MARCH CHEESE CLUB

Spring Into This Month's Fromage



WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

Is that the sun welcoming us into a new season? As much as we love the cold, cozy winter months, there is nothing quite like the awakening of Spring to bring us to out of our funk and into new beginnings.

With Spring Equinox and Daylights Savings upon us, we are enthralled to share with you some domestic and imported gems in this months issue.

We are excited to introduce you to one of Wisconsin's newest makers, as well as travel across the French countryside, hop on over to England, and loop on back to the States for a funky and fun original!

- **CROTTIN DE BRIEBS**
- **LAKE EFFECT**
- **QUICKE'S GOAT CHEDDAR**
- **TIMBERDOODLE**



All About Brebis

You've heard of *chevre*. This ubiquitous fresh goat's milk cheese graces supermarket cheese displays, fast-casual salads, & high-end cheese boards. And maybe you've tried *fromage blanc*? This delightful wonder is made with cow's milk, and you'll normally find it on a hunk of baguette or swooped onto your morning toast. There's another luscious, lactic cheese you should know: *Brebis* (pronounced "breh-bee"), the fresh sheep's milk cousin of these two more common cheeses.

In France, "brebis"—which comes from the French for "ewe"—functions the way "chevre" does. The word refers to sheep's milk cheese of any age. The same way "chevre" can mean a fresh, spreadable lactic cheese made from goat's milk or a wrinkle-rinded crottin, *brebis* can be used to describe any sheep's milk cheese produced in the French or Basque manner. The term is often used for French sheep cheeses, particularly those produced in the Pyrenees, the mountainous region dividing Spain and France that's also home to the Basque people.

Aged mountain cheeses made from sheep's milk like *Ossau-Iraty* (full AOC name: *Ossau-Iraty-Brebis-Pyrenees*) fall under the category of *brebis*. Rich, pungent *Roquefort*—the iconic French blue cheese—is also a *brebis*, although the term is typically limited to wheels made in the hard-aged mountain style. In the United States, however, the term *brebis* is often used to refer to a fresh, lactic cheese made from ewe's milk—the sheep equivalent of fresh *chevre* or *fromage blanc*.

Like its soft, spreadable goat and cow's milk cousins, *brebis* is a lactic or acid-set cheese. The milk (whatever animal it comes from) is coagulated primarily from cultures producing lactic acid. The acid causes proteins in milk to form into curd over a much longer timespan (think 16 to 24 hours versus just 30 minutes for rennet-set cheeses). This creates a bright, acidic flavor and a softer, weaker structure in the finished product. After forming the curd, a fresh, high-moisture cheese like *brebis* would then be drained in cloth bags before being packaged.



So what's the difference between these cheeses if they're all soft, spreadable, and aged for just a few days? Although each one has the characteristic tang of a fresh lactic cheese, *chevre* tends towards more citrusy notes and a drier texture. *Fromage blanc*, made with cow's milk, tends to have a milder flavor and richer texture than *chevre*. But *brebis* is even more luscious, soft, and supple. Why? Because sheep's milk contains twice as much fat and 70 percent more protein than the others. Since cheesemaking is essentially the art of capturing as much of these solids as possible, you need only half as much sheep's milk to make a pound of cheese as you do cow's or goat's milk. And because fresh cheeses are so dependent on the quality of the milk they're made from—without secondary cultures, aging time, or affinage techniques to bring out more complex flavors—*brebis* is the richest of them all, with a subtly earthy flavor beneath the brightness of its lactic acid cultures.

Sadly, brebis is much less common here than chevre or fromage blanc. Out of the 60,000-plus verified USDA farms, only a few hundred are sheep farms. There are multiple reasons for this. Despite their high-yielding milk, sheep produce just a tenth of the volume of milk that cows do. They're also very susceptible to health issues like parasites, diseases, and predators, which makes the animals riskier for dairy farmers to raise. Plus, outdated restrictions around importing sheep during the mad cow disease panic in the late '90s have made it nearly impossible to import better-quality breeding stock for dairy sheep from Europe or Canada. If you're lucky enough to have a small sheep dairy farm in your region, chances are they're producing a brebis-style cheese. Whether you're serving it on a cheese board, spreading it on bread, or even schmearing it on your morning bagel, smooth, supple brebis is worth seeking out.

Organic Crottin De Brebis

This wrinkly little cutie packs a lot of flavor in its small format. Produced by Pascal Beillevaire in 3 French locations, this is a cheesemonger favorite and one of our go-to cheese selections here at the shop.

Pascal Beillevaire, was born and raised on his parents dairy farm in the Marais Vendéen. The Marais Vendéen lies between the Loire River and Noirmoutier Island. Its wild grasslands have enchanted many farmers over the years, who subsequently decided to settle there and dedicate themselves to farming and cheese making. This was certainly the case for Pascal Beillevaire, who dreamed of blending two of his dearest passions: trade and agriculture. He began selling cream, butter and some other dairy products in the local markets around Machecoul. Many years of hard work and dedication have transformed the family dairy farm into Beillevaire Dairy – a respectable cheese maker, affineur and distributor. Beillevaire's business model is unique, operating as both a producer and affineur.

Beillevaire makes cheeses, butter, cream and yogurt. To meet demand for their products, milk is collected twice daily from a dozen nearby family farms and brought to the workshops still warm. Milk collection has become a trademark process of the business, ensuring that only the highest quality milk is used for their products. All of Beillevaire's products are artisanal -they are among the last producers making butter with raw cow cream in wooden churns.



Ewe Have To Be Kidding Me!



- Pasteurized Sheep Milk
- Country of Origin France
- Aged 3- 6 Weeks
- Semi Soft
- Flavor profile: lactic cream, toasted hazelnut, fresh milk
- Best enjoyed with a crusty baguette, walnut or dark berry jam
- Ciders or sparkling wines pair well



Blakesville Dairy Farm



This wonderful & new domestic farm based out of Port Washington in Wisconsin is a West Coast exclusive. This is the first batch of cheese being sent to our golden coast, and we are excited to share this gem of a dairy with you! Established in 2020 under its prior name Afterglow Dairy Farm, this is a prime example of American farmstead excellence!

Blakesville Farm is an 800-acre property located directly adjacent to Lake Michigan, about 30 miles north of Milwaukee. Opening in the summer 2020 with seasoned cheesemaker Veronica Pedraza at the helm (or vat), they grow 100% of their feed, milk their own herd of 900 Saanen and Alpine goats, & hand-ladle and make lactic-set cheese beauties. They're also almost entirely run by women in leadership positions. Their owner, business manager, head cheesemaker, sales director, & assistant farm manager are all women.

What's the difference between a dairy farm and a creamery?

A farmstead creamery means that cheese is produced on the same property where the animals live. Generally, a dairy farm just produces milk and a creamery just produces cheese.

Lake Effect

With a dense, velvety texture, and an incredibly thin rind, Lake Breeze brings a mineral tang and an herbal earthiness reminiscent of Loire Valley cheeses. With its dense, creamy texture, and delicate, snowy rind, this cheese shows how friendly and approachable young farmstead goat cheese can be.

Veronica says the process for making this cheese is similar to the chevre, but additional cultures are added to help with the rind development. "The cheese is drained into the little round form it comes in. It's dried, salted and aged for 2-3 weeks. Then it gets wrapped up and shipped off," said Veronica.

Uses: Blakesville Creamery Lake Breeze cuts neatly into elegant portions for great presentation on cheese boards or picnic platters. Its a pure ivory color and delicate flavor and aroma make it fit into most cheese situations. For best flavor and texture, allow to come to room temperature before serving.

Pairings: Blakesville Creamery Lake Breeze pairs beautifully with crisp white wines and sparklers, hard ciders, natural roses and reds, and fizzy cocktails. It goes great with olives, old world salamis and crunchy crudites.



Quicke's Goat's Milk Clothbound Cheddar

For over 450 years, the Quicke's family have been farming at Newton St. Cyres in Devon, England. The 1,500-acre property has been continuously farmed by the family for over 12 generations and the lush scenery provides rich, nutritious grazing for their animals.

The Brits take their cheddar seriously, and this is definitely the case at Quicke's. They have specialized in clothbound cheddar for generations, but when they introduced goat's milk into the equation, it changed the game.

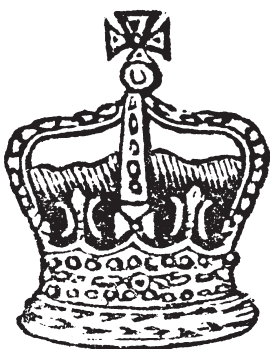
Cheddar cheese is a decidedly UK invention. However, clothbound cheddar has a foggier, more disputed history. Previous theories state that just as the English invented the cheddar family, they also came up with the clothbound aging process. The idea of early US colonists inventing the clothbound method is one that has gained more traction in recent years. Utilizing one of early America's bountiful natural resources, cotton was suddenly available for production purposes, and wrapping the cheese in cloth became a popular method to limit moisture loss and form a hard rind, better protecting the aging wheels of precious cheese from the unpredictable New World weather.

However, with the advent of wax coated cheddars, clothbound cheddars eventually fell out of favor. Wax fully sealed the cheese and shielded it from outside elements, meaning that cheesemakers didn't have to carefully monitor the aging process. Additionally, coating cheddar in wax essentially eliminated evaporation and shrinkage, which left cheesemakers with more cheese to sell at the end of the aging process than the traditional clothbound method. However, the taste of wax coated cheddar does not compare with the clothbound version, which has a much more condensed, developed flavor and drier texture.

All cheddar, regardless of aging style, starts in the same way.

Cheesemakers heat milk before adding starter culture and rennet and allowing the curd to form. Once the curd has been cut into pieces and those curds have settled, the whey is poured off, and the curds are allowed to drain in cheesecloth. As the curds drain, they begin to knit together into a solid mass. This mass is sliced into smaller loaves and stacked on top of one another. The weight from these curdy towers helps to drain off whey from the curds.

At Quicke's after pressing the cheese in molds, they "dress" the cheese and mature it in muslin cloth. Unlike cheese matured in a vacuum bag, cloth-wrapped cheese loses some moisture through the cloth. Moisture drives maturing, and don't be scared of the molds that grow on the rind. This is naturally occurring and nothing to be alarmed about.



Though Quicke's farm is the home to plenty of cows, but not a goat in sight, they were able to source rich goat's milk from a nearby farmer. Just like their other cheddars, the goat's milk was treated with equal love - cut, pressed, and drained by hand. Bound in cloth, the cheese matures to perfection after six months. During that time, it develops the taste of toasted almonds and whipped butter, while still maintaining a sweetness that is the quintessential goat flavor.



In a glass: To balance its earthy flavor, clothbounds are best enjoyed with sweet, fruit forward wines or strong, medium-dry ciders.

On the cheeseboard: Smoked nuts harmonize with the full-bodied flavors of cheddar, while apple-pepper jellies adds a surprising twist.

Include crusty French bread or neutral flavored crackers to avoid interfering with the other items being served.

In the kitchen: Clothbound cheddar melts beautifully in warm dishes, but let it be the star of the meal instead of a side player.



- Pasteurized Goat's Milk
- Country of Origin ~ England
- Aged 6+ Months
- Clothbound Cheddar

QUICKE'S
EST. 1540



Cheddar Corn Soufflé From Matt Lewis and Renato Poliafito's Baked Elements

Cheddar Corn Soufflé can be served as a dessert—a studious, old-school, cheese course. It can also be served as an appetizer. Or as a side. Or, less typically, as a main course. We actually encourage you, if you are feeling full of morning pep, to try it out on unsuspecting brunch guests. The fact is, we really don't care when you serve this multipurpose concoction. We just encourage you to make it often. Our riff on this venerable dish is punched up with the decidedly unsubtle extra-sharp cheddar (we have classic macaroni and cheese on the brain) and a handful of corn. The two flavors complement each other well, and the corn adds a bright burst of texture. Finally, we think our perfectly golden Cheddar Corn Soufflé is one of those dishes that fancifies the mood with little effort, and everyone knows we could use a bit more fancy in our lives.

Ingredients

- 1.2 tablespoons finely grated fresh Clothbound Goat cheese
2. ½ teaspoon salt
3. ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
4. ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
5. ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne
6. 1 cup whole milk
7. 2 ounces (½ stick) unsalted butter
8. ¼ cup all-purpose flour
9. 5 large eggs, separated, plus 1 large egg white, at room temperature
10. ¾ teaspoon cream of tartar
11. 1 cup packed grated extra-sharp cheddar cheese (about 4 ounces)
12. ½ cup fresh corn kernels or frozen corn, thawed*



1. Heat the oven to 400°F and position the rack in the center. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 1½-quart soufflé dish. Dust the soufflé dish with the cheese (so that it adheres to the butter) and knock out the excess.
2. Whisk together the salt, nutmeg, black pepper, and cayenne in a small bowl. Set aside.
3. Warm the milk (do not boil it) in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Remove from the heat once tiny bubbles appear around the pan's perimeter.
4. Melt the butter in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan. Add the flour and whisk until completely combined, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, wait 30 seconds, then slowly stream the milk into the butter mixture while whisking constantly. Continue whisking until smooth, and return to the heat. Cook until the mixture bubbles and becomes thick, 8 to 10 minutes. When bubbles appear, remove from the heat and whisk in the spice mixture. Continue stirring vigorously for about 1 minute to release some of the heat. Add the 5 egg yolks, one at a time, whisking after each addition. After all the yolks are completely incorporated, transfer the mixture to a large bowl.
5. Whisk the 6 egg whites vigorously for 1 minute in another large bowl (or in the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment). Sprinkle the cream of tartar over the whites and continue beating until the egg whites form stiff peaks.
6. Fold one-third of the egg white mixture into the soufflé base. Add the cheddar cheese and corn, along with half of the remaining egg whites, and gently fold until almost incorporated. Gently fold in the remaining egg whites until completely but just incorporated.
7. Transfer the entire mixture to the prepared soufflé dish. Run your thumb around the inside edge of the dish to wipe away any stray mixture (this will provide for an even rise), place the soufflé in the oven, and immediately reduce the oven temperature to 375°F. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the soufflé is puffy, slightly golden, and the center is just about set.
8. Transfer the soufflé dish to a serving platter and serve immediately.



Woodcock Farm

Woodcock Farm is located near Weston in the Green Mountain region of Vermont. Here, Mark and Gari Fischer run a flock of East Friesian dairy sheep that graze across the farm's 45 acres.

Timberdoodle is a colloquial name for the bird known as a woodcock, the namesake of this small Vermont creamery. This artisan cheese is luscious, fudgy, and creamy with a nutty and buttery flavor that will drive you bananas. Timberdoodle is washed with brine as it ages, giving it a hint of pungency. It has the creaminess of a soft cows milk, but it is firm enough to slice cleanly. The rind-washing and aging gives it a pungency that becomes intoxicating. We call it a funky cheese, but the funk is almost entirely in its odor. The second you bite in it melts in your mouth with fresh cream, grass, and butter. Aged 2-3 months.



Cheesemonger Trick

Smell this cheese before you taste it! Sometimes what we smell might not actually correlate to what we taste.

While smelling Timberdoodle notice how pungent and 'barnyardy' it comes across. However, upon tasting it the flavor is actually quite fudgy and mild. You cant always judge a cheese by its sight or smell!



Washed Rind

The name says it all: washed rind cheeses are so called because of the treatment they receive during the aging process, which includes regular washing in a salt solution (sometimes in beer or wine!) that results in each cheese being imbued with a new, distinct flavor. Historically, cheeses were washed during medieval times to keep them fresh. Not long after this tradition began, the monks tending to the cheese began to realize the delicious effects of this treatment. Recognizable by their orange-tinted rinds and typically smooth, gooey interior, these cheeses can range in profile from meat and mushrooms to bread and butter. If you're familiar with washed rind favorites like Epoisses and Taleggio, this Domestic cheese will surely knock your socks off!



Belgian ales, Lambics, hard ciders, and IPA's are particularly washed rind-friendly. The rule of thumb is to match intensities between beer and cheese, or strive for contrast .