



**QUESO DIEGO**  
THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

# **Smoked Cheese**

***Chris Banker***

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# Outline

- ① Reasons to smoke cheese, history
- ① Smoked cheese styles
- ① Woods to smoke with
- ① How to smoke cheese
- ① Smokers and DIY options
- ① Pairings and Recipes
- ① Q&A

# Why Smoke Cheese?

Why would you smoke a perfectly good cheese?

- Change flavor profile
  - New and exciting flavors
  - Turn ordinary cheese into something special
- Preserve
  - Antimicrobial and antioxidant properties

# History of Smoked Cheese

- Records of Roman smoked cheeses date back to 300 AD
- Romans were known to have smokehouses for smoking cheese
- Gouda dates back to the 1100's and was likely smoked early in it's history

# Styles of Cheese to Smoke

- ⦿ Needs to hold together - at least semi-firm
  - ⦿ Soft cheeses are likely to fall apart without careful treatment
- ⦿ Softer hard cheeses tend to take on flavor more readily than very hard ones
  - ⦿ e.g. young Gouda
- ⦿ Limitations are minimal, so there are lots of choices.

# Traditional Smoked Styles

Smoked Gouda  
(Holland)

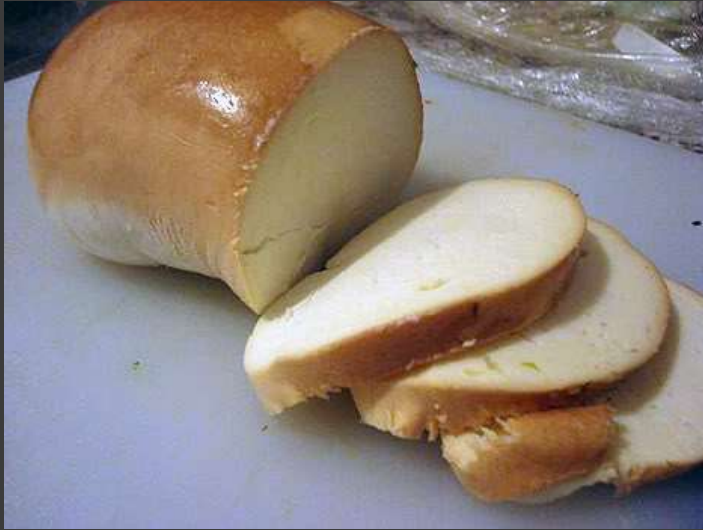


Smoked Cheddar  
(USA, England)



# Traditional Smoked Styles (2)

Smoked Mozzarella  
(Italy)



Rauchkaes (Germany)



# Traditional Smoked Styles (3)

San Simon (Spain)



Kurpianka (Poland)





# Spotlight Cheese: Bruder Basil

- ⦿ Bergader Private Cheese Dairy
- ⦿ Bavaria, Germany
- ⦿ Founded by Basil Weixler in 1902
- ⦿ Cow Milk
- ⦿ Rauchkase based on a washed-rind abbey style cheese
- ⦿ Smoked over beechwood



# Rauchbier – German Smoke Beer

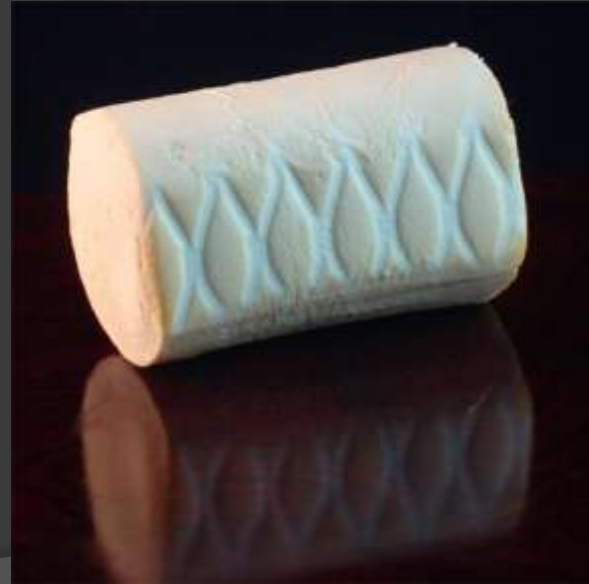


# Modern Smoked Cheeses

Rogue Smokey Blue



Hickory Smoked  
Chevre



# Spotlight Cheese: Rogue Smokey Blue

- ⦿ Rogue Creamery
- ⦿ Central Point, OR
- ⦿ Unpasteurized Cow Milk
- ⦿ Roquefort-style Blue
- ⦿ Cold smoked 16 hours with hazelnut shells
- ⦿ First west-coast blue and first smoked blue



# Which Woods Work Well

## Common Smoking Woods:

- Alder - Light, slightly sweet
- Hickory - strong, pungent
- Maple - mild
- Pecan - spicy, nutty
- Mesquite - strong, can overpower
- Cherry, Apple - mild, fruity, slightly sweet
- Oak - moderate - between fruit woods and hickory



# Which Woods Work Well (2)

- ⦿ Avoid: Cedar, Cypress, Elm, Eucalyptus, Pine, Fir, Redwood, Spruce, Sycamore
- ⦿ Great for cheeses: Fruit woods, hickory, oak
- ⦿ Blend different woods for complexity
- ⦿ Hands-On: Wood Samples - Chips and Pellets

# Spotlight Cheeses: Smoked Goudas

- Dutch Tradition Gouda (CostCo)
- Home smoked using a pellet smoke generator
- Two different woods: cherry and hickory
- Sample them both to compare

# How to Smoke Cheeses

- ⦿ (Optional) - Chill cheese in freezer to help prevent melting during smoking
- ⦿ Put cheese in smoker and start cold smoking
  - Use ice as needed to maintain temperature
- ⦿ Smoke to desired flavor - a few hours to 12 or more hours
- ⦿ (Optional) – Allow to rest in fridge for a couple days



# A Note on Liquid Smoke

- Many less expensive commercial smoked cheeses use smoke flavor
- Liquid Smoke can be easily used to replicate this if desired
- Not a preferred method for artisan products



# Quick Smoked Cheese Ideas

- ◉ Homemade or Store-bought fresh mozzarella
- ◉ Store-bought Gouda or Swiss
- ◉ Homemade Queso Fresco (fresh)
- ◉ A great way to do something different with basic homemade cheeses
- ◉ A simple way to turn inexpensive CostCo cheese into something special

# Inexpensive Smoker Designs

## ⦿ Requirements

- Needs a way of generating smoke without significant fire/heat (cold smoker)
- Needs to be a relatively enclosed cooking space

## ⦿ Lots of Options

- Offset Firebox Smoker
- Pellet Trays
- DIY Options

## ⦿ Many more expensive complete solutions

# Smoker Designs - Offset Firebox

- ◉ Common design, inexpensive versions available starting around \$100
- ◉ Lots of uses
- ◉ Burns wood chips or chunks



# Smoker Designs - Pellet Tray

- ⦿ Wood pellet burning smoke generator
- ⦿ Can be used to turn a grill or hot smoker into a cold smoker
- ⦿ Separates temperature from smoke generation

# Smoker Designs - Pellet Tray (2)

- AMNPS (A-Maze-N Pellet Smoker) is a very popular option
- Load up “maze” with wood pellets
- Can smoke for about 12 hours on a full tray
- About \$50



# Smoker Designs - DIY Pan and Bin

- DIY design from household materials
- Smoke pan, dryer hose, plastic bin



# Smoker Designs - DIY Soldering Iron

- DIY design from soldering iron
- Electric smoke generator
- Soldering iron, tin can





# Smoker Designs - Bix's Kamado



# Smoker Designs - Bix's Kamado (2)



# Smoked Cheese Beverage Pairings

- ◎ In general – make sure beverage can stand up to strong smoke flavors
- ◎ Scotch, Bourbon, and Rye are great candidates
- ◎ Malty or smoked beers; crisp German lagers
  - Be careful of clashing flavors for smoke beers
- ◎ Red wines; Assertive white wines

# Recipes Using Smoked Cheeses

- ◉ Smoked Mac 'n Cheese
- ◉ Chicken Stuffed with Smoked Cheese
- ◉ Smoked Cheese Lasagna
- ◉ Penne Primavera with Smoked Gouda
- ◉ Grilled Cheese and other sandwiches
- ◉ ... and many more ...
- ◉ Smoked cheeses can replace regular cheese in any dishes where the smoke will fit the flavors

# Questions?

