

# Sacrebleu!

All about that Blue

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**QUESO DIEGO**  
THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

# Outline

- What is Blue Cheese?
- History and Styles
- Process
- Recipes

# We've got blue!

- The main thing that makes a blue cheese blue is mold.
- The higher amount of veining does not necessarily equate to strong flavors. For example Point Reyes Original Blue has relatively little veining yet quite strong and St. Agur has quite a bit of veining but tastes rather sweet.
- Originally a product of the environment in which they were ripened.
- In the case of Roquefort, the Roquefort caves in which the cheese was stored were teeming with *Penicillium roqueforti*.

# What is this *Pencillium roqueforti*?

- Blue mold similar to what we see on bread
- Related to Pencillin
- Aerobic - needs oxygen to grow and thrive
  - Holes are usually poked to allow oxygen to enter the cheese
- *Penicillium glaucum* is also used in some cheeses
- Can be mixed in during curd formation or after

# Blue Styles - Moldy Gold

Some of the most well known are Roquefort (France), Stilton (England), Gorgonzola (Italy) and Danablu (Denmark). America stumbles along to the blue cheese party when in 1941, production of the Maytag Blue cheese began.

# Roquefort

Roquefort - The French do Blue.  
The most famous of them all.

From the region surrounding  
Roquefort-sur-Soulzon



Pliny the Elder, Roman naturalist, (23-79 CE) wrote of the cheese from a mountainous region of France near the Mediterranean that might have been Roquefort, and it is reputed that even Charlemagne himself was served Roquefort at the monastery of St. Gall in 778.

## Stilton: The King of Blues

The first known written reference to Stilton cheese was in William Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum*, Letter V, dated October 1722, and Daniel Defoe in his 1724 work *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain* notes, wrote:

"We pass'd Stilton, a town famous for cheese, which is call'd our English Parmesan, and is brought to table with the mites, or maggots round it, so thick, that they bring a spoon with them for you to eat the mites with, as you do the cheese."



For cheese to use the name "Stilton", it must be made in one of the three counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, and must use pasteurised local milk. The manufacturers of Stilton cheese in these counties applied for and received Protected Geographical Status (PDO) in 1996.

Blue Stilton's distinctive veins are created by piercing the crust of the cheese with stainless steel needles, allowing air into the core. The ripening process takes 9-12 weeks.



# The Gorgonzola Controversy!

Gorgonzola has been made in Gorgonzola, Milan for a millenia, acquiring it's classic blue veins in the 11th century. However, its proprietary designation of origin status by the European Commision as the Blue Cheese of Italy is disputed by other regions of Italy.

Often uses *P. glaucum* rather than *P. roqueforti*.







## Danablu

Danablu is one of only two Danish Cheeses recognized by the European Commission. It was invented in the 20th century by Marius Boel with the intention of emulating a Roquefort. It's a milder blue.

Before aging, copper wires are used to distribute the mold - the holes are still visible upon ripening.

# Popular Blues

As people become more conscious of the need for quality over quantity, European and American cheese makers are refining ancient standards and we're going to try a few examples tonight.

## Point Reyes Blue

### POINT REYES ORIGINAL BLUE

You've gotta get up pretty early then wait about five months to make a Blue this good.

So good in fact that Original Blue won Best Cheese/Dairy Product at the 2011 Fancy Food Show in Washington DC (awarded by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, NASFT).

#### DESCRIPTION:

Creamy, layers of full flavor. All natural and made with raw milk. Original Blue is gluten-free and made with microbial (vegetarian) rennet.

Tasting Note: Sweet, fresh milk with a medium-to-strong punch of blue flavor.

Uses: A great Cheese Course blue, perfect for salads, dressings, dips, in a sauce for steak, and grilled vegetables.

#### PARTNERS:

Sweet Foods: honey, figs, stone fruit, berries

Savory Foods: salads, pasta, red meat, vegetables

Drink: Sparkling wine, sweeter white wines, such as Viognier, full bodied reds such as Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon and vintage port.



# Valdeon

A Spanish blue made with mixed milk - cow, goat, and sheep. Aged in sycamore or chestnut leaves.

From Posada de Valdeon in Leon

Spirited and tangy, great with pears.

Wine: Rioja, Madeira, Oloroso Sherry, Sauternes.



# Shropshire

A “Blue Cheddar” made with cow milk

Sharp, intense, pungent

England / Scotland - First made in the 1970s at Castle Stuart dairy in Inverness by Andy Williamson from Stilton.

When the Castle Stuart Dairy closed the cheese moved south to England through Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and now Shropshire on the Welsh Border.



Pairs with:

- Bold Red Wine
- Intense Stouts
- Barrel Aged Barleywines





# Cambozola

- “Blue Brie”
- Camembert + Gorgonzola
- Originated in Germany
- Classic “Blue” version and pungent longer-aged “Black”.

Pairs with:

- Porter/Stout
- Pinot Noir
- Dry Sparkling Wines



# Process - How to make a blue cheese

- A blue mold, such as penicillium Roquefort is typically integrated during acidification, when bacteria are added
- Curd typically formed loose enough to allow some veining
- Not pressed or minimal pressing
- More salt than many other styles
- Poke holes to allow air to reach the interior for mold development
- Maintain around 55 degrees to avoid excessive growth
- Remove excess / unwanted mold with vinegar

# Process - How to skip buying mold

- Buying *P. roqueforti* from the cheesemaking shop is expensive and only gives you one option
- You can make your own inoculant from commercial cheese!
- Pick a blue cheese you like with active mold
- Put about 1-2 tsp of blue cheese and ¼ cup cold water in a blender
- Blend until no chunks remain
- Add to your cheese when you add acidification cultures

# Blue Cheese Recipe - Ingredients

- 2 gallons whole milk (not ultra pasteurized)
- 1-2 tsp of commercial blue cheese
- ½ tsp of flora danica culture
- ½ tsp liquid rennet
- 2 TBSP cheese salt



# Blue Cheese Recipe - Instructions (1)

- Make inoculant: blend 1-2 tsp of blue cheese in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a blender
- Heat milk slowly to 86F
- Add flora danica and blue cheese inoculant and allow to rehydrate, stir in
- Let sit for 30-45 mins to acidify
- Dilute rennet in a bit of unchlorinated water and mix rennet in with about 20-25 gentle up-down strokes of a spoon.
- Let sit for about 45 mins or until clean break is achieved.
- Cut curd into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch cubes using a knife or frosting spreader
- let curds sit for about 10 mins

# Blue Cheese Recipe - Instructions (2)

- work curds for about 10 mins to expel whey
- let curds sit for another 10 mins
- gently ladle curds into a cheesecloth-lined colander
- gently mix in salt
- Put in a mold to drain for at least 2 hours
- Flip and drain overnight

# Blue Cheese Recipe - Instructions (3)

- Poke holes ( $\sim\frac{1}{4}$ ) with a sanitized screwdriver, or stainless skewer. Holes should be in both directions throughout.
- Air dry for about a day, checking frequently for excessive growth
- Age at 55 F, keeping an eye on the bloom and making sure nothing bad is growing - should be green/blue and white. Clean with vinegar and salt as needed.
- It may help to re-open holes after a few days if they get clogged.
- Age for at least 2-4 weeks or until desired character is obtained.

# Questions?

