

QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

Where Cheese Education Meets Cheese Gastronomy

The May 2018 Newsletter



**Mark your calendar for the next meeting:
May 15, 6:30 p.m., Alesmith**

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From the desk of Queso Grande, Curt Wittenberg:

Grilled cheese, that mundane childhood lunch of toasty buttered white bread and melted Velveeta cheese. Sure, it evokes memories of childhood and mom's nurturing touch but, as we grew and matured, many of us shed the grilled cheese sandwich along with our innocence. But then, enter the Infamous Queso Diego Grilled Cheese Meeting...slabs of queso fresco, aromatic emmenthal, dripping triple cream brie, fresh mascarpone, waffles of tater tots or vegetables or just saturated with maple syrup and butter, crusty sourdough bread, a dozen of slider buns, sliced pound cake, pineapple, baked pears with cinnamon sugar, fried eggs, pulled pork, hot peppers, bacon... and everything changes...well, not everything, thanks to Larry. Congratulations to all of you for your creative force and fearlessness that has led to yet another highly successful Grilled Cheese Meeting. I think I am still full.

Now we move on to the next events. It's time to reinvigorate those creative forces toward the goal of cheesemaking. In May, we will learn about the tools of cheesemaking, especially the cheese cave. Chris Banker will take us through the process of assembling and using an inexpensive cheese cave for successful affinage (aging; ripening). With a cave you can move past fresh chèvre and feta to gouda, cheddar, Epoisses and other aged wonders. It is a step many in the club would like to take and it can be done for a small investment and a little handiwork. The payoff is considerable. As an accompaniment to Chris' presentation, anyone who is so motivated can have a minute or two to share any simple gadget that they feel has helped them with their cheesemaking. This is especially appropriate if it is homemade or very inexpensive, but very useful. Finally, at the same meeting, we will hear from Marci Richards about the Del Mar Fair Cheesemaking Competition and how it will be organized and judged. Having learned all of that, you can put your tools to work, along with supplies from the Library of Cheesemaking, and make your own creation to compete for one or more of the many prizes we have collected for winners of the competition.

Finally, let's all be sure to thank Earl and Jeffree Itrich for all they have contributed to the success of Queso Diego. Earl, our immediate past president, and Jeffree, our newsletter editor and social media manager, have made numerous contributions to the management of the club as well as spreading their good humor and good will generously over the years. We hope they come to visit us when they pass through town. If we are lucky we might see an occasional story from Jeffree in the newsletter, which will now be edited by Beth Surrell (Thank you, Beth). Make sure to do what you can to make that transition easier by contributing a story or a recipe to the newsletter in the coming months. So, in closing, a hearty THANK YOU from Queso Diego to Earl and Jeffree.

Till next time,
Curt

June is National Dairy Month and the last week of June is National Cheese Week. How are you going to celebrate?

Take Advantage of Our Library of Cheesemaking

Your membership in Queso Diego comes with an opportunity to make wonderful cheeses without a big financial investment. With the help of several of our members, Jack Ford and the Berry Good Food Foundation, we have made available a large collection of reusable cheesemaking tools and expendable cheesemaking supplies to members of the club.

- The tools include more than 100 cheese forms, several cheese presses, and numerous others. Those can be checked out by members for use in their cheesemaking. These are all available for your use upon request with no charge.
- The supplies include more than 20 cheesemaking cultures, sufficient for all of the major styles of cheese, several forms of rennet and lipase, calcium chloride solution, cheese mat, fine weave cheesecloth, and more. These are available for \$1 per item (1 tube of culture sufficient for 2-4 gallons of milk; 1 cheese mat; 1 tube of annatto or of calcium chloride).
- A library of cheesemaking books is being developed and should be available soon. Books can be checked out free of charge for a limited period.

To use the library, access the spreadsheet with list of items here:

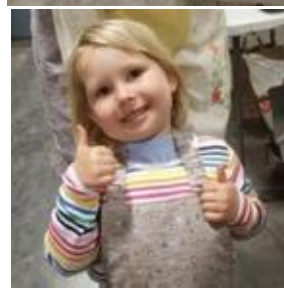
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXiR2R720/edit#gid=333222537

When you do so, you will need to request access, which will be granted only if you are a member. After getting access, read the directions, examine the spreadsheet and select the items you need for your next cheese. To request those items send an e-mail to: qd-library-request@googlegroups.com. You will need to provide your contact information, the name and number of the item(s) you would like, when you need them (generally the next meeting, unless you make special arrangements). You will receive a message informing you of the availability, the delivery arrangements and the cost to you. Remember to request items from the Library of Cheesemaking at least 5 days before the meeting so we have time to arrange to get them to you.

Once you receive the items you will be ready to make those wonderful cheeses you have been dreaming about. Remember, all tools and books must be returned to the library or passed on to another user once you are finished with it. The success of the library depends upon your responsible use. Happy cheesemaking!

In case You Missed the April Grilled Cheese Meeting.....it was awesome!





Cheese Competition at the San Diego County Fair

By Marci Richards.

June 30th! Mark your calendars. This is the date of the cheese competition at the San Diego County Fair. Anyone can enter the competition; it is for all levels of cheese makers. So, how does it work?

Well, first you choose which cheese to make.....hmm, will it be a cheddar, brie, chevre, ricotta, yogurt cheese or ???



Second, everyone brings their cheese to the fair on June 30th (note, the cheese gets you into the fair for free). Each cheese is evaluated (technical and aesthetics) and scored by the judges. We are honored to have Jenny Eastwood, an American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professional, of Small Goods USA, judging and coordinating judges for the competition.

While the judging occurs, there will be presentations, time to mingle with other cheese makers and/or visit other fair exhibits. Then there is the award ceremony with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each category, and a Best-of-Show. We have some generous sponsors that have contributed prizes for the winners in each category and Best-of-Show.

And the big plus this year, the score sheets with the judge's comments will be provided to the contestants. This is a great way to get feedback on your cheese. So, what cheese are you making? We want to see you and your cheese at the Fair!

NOTE: At the May meeting, there will be a short presentation regarding the finer points for entering the cheese competition and the judging.

Upcoming Events and a Recipe

By Sabine Friedrich-Walter

- In June or July we hope to visit the Kane Goat Farm in Lakeside, stay tuned for further information.
- We're also hoping to visit the Konyn Dairy Farm in Escondido in August. More details forthcoming.
- In the planning process: a cider and cheese pairing

With summer right around the corner, here's a recipe for a dip or condiment to accompany your backyard BBQ.



Za'atar -Spiced Beet Dip with Goat cheese and Nuts (Hazelnuts)



Za'atar Spice

Dip:

- 1 1/2 pounds cooked red beets, peeled and cut into wedges
- 2 small garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 3 Tablespoons Olive oil
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons honey or maple syrup
- 1 Tablespoon Za'atar spice or Dukkah (Trader Joe's) or Harissa as a substitute – but be careful – it's spicy!
- Salt to taste

In a food processor, pulse all ingredients until well blended and turns into a puree. Transfer to a wide serving bowl.

Topping:

- 1/4 cup roasted nuts , preferred skinned and chopped hazelnuts
- 1/4 cup or more crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese
- 2 Spring onions, thinly sliced for garnish

Scatter toppings on the top of the puree and enjoy with warm bread or pita.

Most of these ingredients can be found at Trader Joe's.

Bon Appetit,
Sabine

Travel Cheese - Madagascar, Kenya, and Italy

By Chris Banker

I recently took a trip to Madagascar, Kenya, and Italy. Italy obviously has extensive cheesemaking, but I was not expecting much from the African countries.



In Madagascar, one of the restaurants I visited on the island of Nosy Be offered a local cheese plate, which I knew I had to try. The plate consisted of 4 cheeses, 2 of which were local. The local ones were something along the lines of a cultured butter and a very interesting "spongy" cheese that was unlike anything I had tried before. I would guess that both of these were made with Zebu milk, as that is the primary dairy animal on the island. The waiter didn't know much about the cheeses, so I don't have a lot of information on them.

Later, on the trip in Nairobi, my friend and I visited the Elephant Orphanage in the Nairobi National Park. After seeing the baby elephants get their mud baths, we were ready to leave but were having trouble with our Uber rides canceling on us. Eventually, the only visitors remaining were us and one other woman, and the armed guards were getting restless. When her Uber arrived, we asked if we could jump in with her to wherever she was going so we could have a better chance at a ride. She agreed and we hopped in. Her name was Liz, and she was a traveler from England who had spent a couple months working in Dar es Salaam before doing some additional traveling in Kenya and Uganda. She was headed to a bakery and cafe that had been recommended to her and we were hoping to head to a different cafe, so we changed our plans and had lunch with her. The bakery had great house made bread, sandwiches, and coffee. Near the register they had some cheese samples and they told us that they were local cheeses that were available at a wine and cheese shop next door, called Lekker. After lunch, we visited the shop and sampled the array of Gouda-style cheeses they had from a local creamery in the Rift Valley. They had a variety of ages and flavors, including young, mature, extra mature, cumin, peppers, garlic, and more. I bought a block of the Extra Mature Gouda and my friend bought the Cumin Gouda. We ate them the next day with some bread from the bakery and they were both great. Unfortunately, my next stop was Italy and they have very strict regulations on bringing dairy into the country, so I was not able to bring any home.



In Rome, I visited a restaurant that a friend had recommended called Cul de Sac. I got a glass of wine and a platter of local cheeses and cured meats. The cheeses were both local to the Lazio region of Italy. One was a dry, hard sheep milk cheese, similar to Pecorino Romano. The other was a higher moisture sheep milk cheese coated with rosemary, akin to a rosemary Ossau-Iraty. The cured meats were a type of cured ham, and a type of large-format salami with peppercorns and large pieces of fat.

Cheesy Trivia

- ❖ The people of Greece are the largest consumers of cheese worldwide. An average person from Greece consumes around 27.3 kg (a little over 60 pounds!) of cheese every year, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of which is feta cheese.
- ❖ Cheese production around the globe is more than the combined worldwide production of coffee, tobacco, tea, and cocoa beans.
- ❖ Some varieties of cheese like mozzarella, cheddar, Swiss and American, help prevent tooth decay. They promote the flow of saliva, which leads to elimination of sugar and acids from the mouth.
- ❖ President Andrew Jackson once had a block of cheddar cheese delivered to the White House that was four feet in diameter, two feet thick, and weighed nearly 1,400 pounds. He invited 10,000 visitors to the White House to eat it and it was gone within two hours.
- ❖ Albertville, France's electricity is powered by Beaufort cheese. Since whey is unnecessary to make Beaufort cheese, bacteria is added to the whey. This transforms the whey into biogas. This gas is then fed through an engine which heats water to 90°C (194°F) to generate 2800 MWh/yr of electricity.
- ❖ Scientists have successfully created cheese using human bacteria collected from human toes and belly buttons. Think we're kidding? Check out the story here: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/scientists-create-toe-belly-button-cheese-from-human-bacteria/>
- ❖ The French have a different cheese for every day of the year. Cheese experts estimate that the total number of different French cheeses is around 1,000.

May the cheese be with you!!



P.S. Bye, everyone. It's been wonderful knowing you and being involved in Queso Diego. If you ever find yourself in Texas, let us know, would love to see you. My email is: jeffreewyn@gmail.com. --- Jeffree