

QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

Where Cheese Education Meets Cheese Gastronomy

The July 2018 Newsletter

Happy July 4th



**Mark your calendar for the next meeting:
July 17, 6:30 p.m., Alesmith**

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SAVE THE DATE: JULY 22nd

Join us for a field trip and potluck at the Kane Family Goat Farm on July 22 at 5:00 p.m. Watch for details in a group email later in the month.

10626 Palm Row Dr.
Lakeside, CA 92040

From the desk of Queso Grande, Curt Wittenberg:

Dear Queso Diegans,

Welcome to summer. Summer comes with dining al fresco, drinking cool refreshing wines and beers and eating plenty of simple fresh cheeses. The nice thing is these cheeses are easy to make, quick to the table and very easy to eat. With our most recent presentation on Chevre and Beyond and our upcoming presentation on Queso Fresco at our July meeting, you will be fully equipped for the joys of summer dining and, at the same time, be impressing yourself and your friends with your cheesemaking prowess.

By the time you see this, the San Diego County Fair Cheesemaking Competition will have come and gone. Undoubtedly, many Queso Diegans will have brought home ribbons for their cheeses, fresh and otherwise. As a club, we should be proud of what we have brought to each other in terms of excitement and knowledge about cheesemaking and what we have brought to the community by sponsoring and improving the fair competition. We have a bunch of club members to thank for those things but most notably our past president, Earl Itrich, our current board member and competition organizer, Marci Richards, and our judge coordinator and resident cheesemonger, Jenny Eastwood. Thank you all.

In keeping with the theme of fresh cheese made and dining al fresco, we will be visiting the Kane Goat Farm for a field trip and potluck in July. There we will experience what life with dairy animals is all about. With a plentiful source of fresh milk many good things are possible. I would like to encourage us all to think of our potluck in the spirit of a farm to table dinner. I know Sabine has some nice things in mind and each of us to try to live up to her high standards of good wholesome food. Let's see what we can make with our own hands, where possible from local ingredients, to contribute to a meal. Some of you grow your own vegetables, some buy from local farmers, some make cheese or beverages from basic ingredients. Let's make it something special.

I know that some feel like it's always summer-like in San Diego. But, as a southern Californian, I can feel the sense of the season. I'm inspired to eat more healthily, more fresh food directly from the garden and more of my own easy creations. I fire up the grill even more often than the rest of the year, whole meals come direct from a sizzling fire, not a pot or pan dirtied, grilled meats, fish and vegetables spilled onto plates in a fury of color. Bright wine, sparkling pilsners and fresh cheese at the outset; full rich hard cheeses with fresh fruit for a finish. It's a season to celebrate our good fortune with creativity and share those creations with others.

Santé



Fresh chèvre crottin with za'atar with fresh garden herbs.



Fresh chèvre crottins in process with homemade sourdough bread

Gouda - By Chris Banker

Gouda is one of my favorite cheese styles to make because of its versatility and the fact that it is slightly easier to make than most other hard cheeses. Gouda is a Dutch cheese style that is characterized by being a washed curd semi-hard to hard cheese. There are many varieties from young semi-hard versions to harder aged versions matured for several years, as well as hickory-smoked and flavored varieties. Gouda is most often made with cow milk, but there are excellent examples of goat and sheep goudas that showcase the characteristics of those milks.

Gouda is pronounced how-duh in the Netherlands, but is often called goo-duh in the USA. I personally consider either pronunciation to be acceptable here, but the Dutch would not agree. Gouda is very popular in the Netherlands, with many shops, cheesemakers, and even a Gouda Museum. If you find yourself there, make a point of seeking out some cheeses.

Gouda is produced as a mesophilic washed- and cooked-curd, semi-hard cheese. Washed-curd refers to the fact that some of the whey is replaced with water during the cheesemaking process, which removes lactose that would normally be converted into lactic acid (sharpness) during aging. This process makes for a milder, sweeter cheese, often with nutty or butterscotch flavors developing with age. The curd is also cooked with the water additions, as warmer water is used to raise the curd temperature and expel whey. The cheese is pressed into wheels that are typically round shaped and aged with a wax coating that is traditionally red.

The aspects that make it slightly easier to make are that the washed-curd process heats with water, which is quicker and does not involve slowly applying heat on the stove while stirring. I have been known to do the curd washing steps while sitting on the couch watching a movie. As a semi-hard cheese, there is not quite as much involved in the whey expelling process, shortening many of the process steps and making it a bit quicker than other hard cheeses. Furthermore, the waxed rind does not require the extended maintenance of natural rind cheeses.

Some examples to seek out:

- Young: Grand Gouda - Dutch Gouda that is a young, mild crowd-pleaser with sweet and savory notes.
- Smoked: Look for any good quality variety made in the Netherlands - Smoked version of a young gouda.
- Aged: Noord Hollander or Beemster XO - Dutch Goudas aged for several years for a firm, crunchy texture and slightly sweet butterscotch flavor; very versatile for beer pairings.
- Flavored: Kokos Coconut Gouda - Dutch Gouda made with coconut cream; a great dessert pairing.
- Goat: Cypress Grove Midnight Moon - American goat milk gouda from the makers of Humboldt Fog.
- Sheep: Ewephoria Sheep Gouda - Dutch sheep milk gouda that is sweet and crunchy, a versatile favorite that everyone is sure to love.
- Mixed Milk: Fourmage - A Dutch Gouda made with 4 different milks: Cow, Sheep, Goat, and Water Buffalo.

My favorite homemade variants are coconut gouda (mix organic coconut cream in with milk and wash curds with coconut milk), sheep gouda (use less rennet, expect higher yield), goat gouda, and orange creamsicle gouda (infuse milk with orange zest and vanilla bean).

As far as making gouda, I have found the recipe in Mary Karlin's [Artisan Cheesemaking at Home](#) book to be a good starting point. I like Flora Danica as the culture, although there are other great culture options to try, many of which are available in the Queso Diego Library of Cheesemaking. Make sure you have a good thermometer, an extra pot for heating filtered water for washing curds, a cheese press, and an aging space. The finished cheese can be waxed in the traditional manner or vacuum bagged.

Between Fresh and Rotten By Lesley Stern

Lesley has offered to write a regular column for our newsletter and plans to intersperse columns on cheese-related this and that with a chapter - *Between Fresh and Rotten* - from her forthcoming book.

Between repetition and compulsion, between obsession and curiosity, between habit and ritual there is a thin line. I walk that line, into the valley of fermentation. First it is bread, and then yoghurt and then cheese and then all those really-almost-rotten ferments like kimchi and sauerkraut. Nose twitching, taste buds quivering, I walk the line.

"Between fresh and rotten there is a creative space in which some of the most compelling of flavors arise."
Sandor Katz

My interest in learning how to conjure the solidity of cheese out of the liquidity of milk grew in tandem with a curiosity about microbes and fermentation and an urgent desire to strengthen a weak immune system and to promote and nurture a healthy gut. But as any fool knows cheese—especially in excess—is not unmitigatedly healthy. It wasn't just an earnest devotion to self-help that plunged me into cheese making. It was a love and taste for cheese that was nurtured early.

My childhood was not festooned with an array of delectable and exotic cheeses. But what I do recall vividly, what pierces the smoky shroud of memory with sharp pungency, is a particularly strong cheddar. When the farm was in strife, losing money fast after a couple of seasons of failing tobacco crops, my parents replaced the habitual Sunday lunch—a huge roast and vegetables followed by a rich chocolate pudding—with what they presented as a very special, indeed extraordinarily exotic, meal called a 'ploughman's lunch.' They in fact had never been to a British pub and had never eaten such a run-of-the-mill meal but my father, in particular, was intrigued by food from all over the world, was always trying out recipes he came across in the Sunday Mail and even adapting and concocting dishes. When I turned 21 my parents did not have the resources to throw an elaborate party, but Dad did cook six dishes from different countries for ten of my friends, which we ate in the garden at Hillmorton Road in Harare (where my parents now lived), under the large old Jacaranda tree through which was threaded a bougainvillea vine. In bloom together: a cascade of purple and flame red. Four years later his ashes would be scattered under that tree. During those bad seasons on the farm when Duncan and I were little kids the exotic feast Dad prepared for us was in actual fact an extremely thrifty meal. There were jars of small brown onions that he had pickled, fermented water melon rinds, bread, and a fabulous strong cheddar cheese, and to round it all out he had brewed some beer and us kids were allowed the tiniest taste, each in our own glass.

He had not made the cheddar, but did explain to us how it came from cows just like ours. In those days and on that farm there seemed no need to draw attention to the primarily grass diet of the cows. It was par for the course. The cows grazed on pasture, occasionally their grass diet augmented by lucerne hay (in the US called alfalfa) and by silage (maize and sorghum and hay, compacted in huge piles or pits in the ground and fermented). We had a herd of 72 Friesian cows (in the US known as Holsteins) and a bull called Hero. Every cow had a name and at 3 in the afternoon in response to the ringing of the simbi they all lined up in the grassy paddock, they lined up voluntarily in order and started trotting towards the dairy where they would wait impatiently, snorting and crapping and grunting and farting, each waiting for her name to be called so her heavy udder could experience relief. The simbi was a plough disk hung from a tree and hit with a piece of metal. Its reverberations, gong-like, would ring out all around the farm.

Microbes work in the gut—human or animal, caterpillar or aphid—and among other things, they digest fibers and things that the host cannot digest, and subsequently they make nutrients and vitamins available to the host. Look at cows lazily chewing the cud, munching endlessly and mindlessly on grass. It's a long slow process because despite all the munching the cows themselves cannot actually digest the grass. But the microbes in their stomachs can; it is they that digest cellulose from plants and produce nutritious acids for their hosts to absorb. Happy cows, happy people who eat those cows and their milk, as opposed to cows force-fed in feed lots, stuffed with grains that they cannot digest properly, fed antibiotics that make them fat and that we absorb in drinking their milk.

Until that ploughman's lunch I had never made a connection between the cows delivering up their milk in the dairy and our daily visit to the row of calves in the barn at feeding time. They would stick their heads out of the small pen in which each was caged and open their mouths, nuzzling, reaching for our hands. We would slip a small hand into a calf's mouth - and experience a frisson of pleasure, the sensation of the ridged corrugated roof of the mouth and the rough sandpaper tongue and the soft slobbery slurping as the calves sucked. Then would come the pails of formula milk and they would duck their small heads in and drink greedily, lifting their frothy faces when finished: gorged, replete. We found it curiously satisfying. We knew where calves came from, had seen cows birthing, we saw human babies all the time on the farm suckling at their mothers' breasts. Yet it never occurred to us to ask why the calves were not with their mothers. Or maybe it did but I don't remember. As we ate that sharp cheddar and Dad explained where it came from, how it came to be on our table, the satisfaction of our harmonious union with the calves was shot through with sharpness. As is goats' cheese sometimes today when I think of those kids yanked from their mothers so we can have milk and of all those boy kids disappeared. The violent edge of dairying and cheesemaking.

It was that strong cheddar that got me going on a path that before many years would lead me into the realm of squishy stinky cheeses redolent of the smells of childhood on a farm.

Summer Bruschetta Recipe By Sabine Friedrich-Walter

Summer Bruschetta delicious with a crisp glass of French Rose made with Ricotta or Chevre (Goat), best if homemade.

- Good quality of baguette cut in 16 slices
- 1 cup each of seedless grapes , red and green
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- dash cloves
- 1 cup ricotta or 1 cup Chevre or 1/2 Ricotta and 1/2 cup Chevre*
- 1-2 tablespoon chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon candied ginger fine minced.
- Mint for garnish & grape halves

Pulse grapes in food processor 3-4 time just until chopped. Transfer to a bowl and mix well with cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves.

In a second bowl stir cheese blend*, nuts and ginger together.

Toast baguette slices and top each slice with one tablespoon cheese mixture and top with 1 spoonful grape mixture. Garnish with a half grape and mint leaf.

Happy Summer and Cheers

Sabine

My favorite Rose: *LE PORTES de BORDEAUX 2017*, Trader Joes for \$5.99

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.
- 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 Provide your contact information, the name and number of the item(s) you would like and 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!

May the cheese be with you!!

