

QUESO DIEGO

THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

November/December 2018

From the desk of Queso Grande, Curt Wittenberg

Holiday Season is upon us. We are all thinking about cheeses and cheesy concoctions for our upcoming Thanksgiving and winter holiday feasts. I hope you all have some great ideas and will share them with the rest of us at our Queso Diego Holiday Party on December 11th.

While the rest of you were sharing your plans for holiday cheeses at our October meeting, I was roaming around South Africa. The trip was fantastic. Ask me if you want to know more but beware, there are more than 2500 photos. Along the way, I had the opportunity to taste many wonderful South African cheeses, where it was a tradition to have a cheese plate out for every breakfast. The cheeses are mostly traditional European styles: intensely blue bleu cheeses, beautifully ripened Camemberts, brie with a central vein of blue (how did they make that?) and some local cheddars and tomme styles. Most were made from cow milk in the region around the Southern Cape where the climate is much like Napa and Sonoma. Being springtime in the southern hemisphere, the grass was green and high and the temperatures were moderate. Sadly, our itinerary was packed and I had little time to see or learn about local cheese-making save a brief visit to an amazing farm called Babylonstoren not far from Stellenbosch, the famous South African wine region. There we saw their spectacular orchards and vegetable beds as well as their bakery, creamery, butcher, and bakery. All were beautifully appointed and we tasted some of their products but they were all uninhabited. Luckily, I was able to purchase a cumin infused Tomme style cheese paired with a pungent garlic bread (Yes, a whole head of garlic was baked into the center of the round loaf, fantastic) and some rich and supple biltong (not shown), a traditional beef jerky like product that is pervasive throughout the country. Paired with a bottle of Stellenbosch wine, it made for very nice evening snack under the thatch roof of the cozy hotel sitting room.

Now I am back home, well-rested, and ready to share amazing cheeses and plenty of holiday cheer with all of you. I look forward to seeing you all at our meetings and events but, in the event I don't, I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a joyous holiday season and a fulfilling new year. Keep it cheesy!



NOVEMBER EVENTS

November 20, 6:30 p.m.

General Meeting @ Ale Smith
Smoked Cheeses



Smoked Cheeses at Nov. 20th General Meeting

The not-to-be missed meeting will be at our usual spot, AleSmith Brewery. Award-winning cheesemaker, Chris Banker, will present on Smoked cheeses. As always our pot-luck begins at 6:30...maybe think about bringing your favorite smoked cheese.

Cider and Cheese Pairing—Dec. 1st, noon—3 pm

Raging Cider and Mead owner, Dave Carr, fell in love with the idea of wild fermented, locally sourced ciders which has led to the creation of Raging Cider & Mead Co. All of the fruits and honey used are locally grown here in San Diego County, including apples and other fruits from Dave & Kerry's estate orchard and farm. All their ciders & meads are produced using traditional methods, including wild fermentation of all the ciders and perrys as well as maceration and fermentation on the skins of various fruits for addition to the meads

Learn more details at our November General Meeting.

DECEMBER EVENTS

December 1, 12 noon

Cider Cheese Pairing at
Raging Cider and Mead

December 11 th

Holiday Party, Potluck &
Raffle, home of Chuck &
Joanne West

Holiday Party Potluck and Raffle—Dec. 11th

This potluck dinner and Raffle is at the West's home. (not AleSmith) Each attendee will receive one raffle ticket to enter to win any of the fabulous prizes. Extra tickets will be available for purchase at the party. This is a free event for paid members and one guest. RSVPs are essential and must be made online. Watch your email for further details and the link to RSVP.



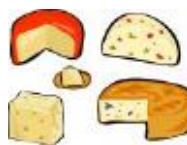
JANUARY EVENTS

January 15, 6:30 p.m.

Anniversary Party—Cheese &
Bubbly Pairing (In place of
our regular monthly meeting)

Annual Anniversary Party with Bubbly and Cheese Pairing—January 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Save the date for this fun event. Details will be provided in the January Newsletter, as well as follow up emails. Attendees must be members who have paid their dues for 2018, so make sure you're up to date on your dues so you don't miss out.



Savory Bread Pudding-like Strata with Gruyere Cheese

Sabine Friedrich-Walter

Ingredients:

Ciabatta bread thin sliced, 8 slices or in 1x1 inch cubes after toasting

4 tablespoon butter

1 pound leeks cleaned and cut in 3 inch length, or in 1 inch "rings" if you use bread cubes. Can substitute spinach for leek.

Pepper & salt

4-5 sun dried tomatoes (not packed in oil)

3/4 cup milk

3/4 cup heavy cream

5 large eggs

Ground nutmeg and cayenne pepper

½ - 1 cup shredded Gruyere cheese



Preheat oven to 350 F.

Toast or grill sliced Ciabatta bread. Set aside.

Blanch leeks in boiling water for 2-3 minutes. After cooking, dip leeks immediately into ice water to cool down quickly. Drain leeks. If using rings, blanch for 1-2 minutes.

Cut sun dried tomatoes into fine strips.

Grease baking dish well with butter. (size dependent on size of your loaf of bread)

Whisk together milk, heavy cream, eggs, pepper and salt, a dash of nutmeg and a pinch cayenne pepper. Fold in sun dried tomato and 1/4-1/2 shredded cheese. Set aside.

Place sliced bread and leeks into the baking dish. Or fold bread cubes and leek gently together. Pour milk-egg mixture on top.

Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 35 minutes remove foil add remaining cheese and finish baking until cheese is golden brown, approximately 15 minutes.

Remove dish from oven and let it sit for 2-5 minutes before serving.

Serve as a main dish with a salad. (3-4 servings)

Bon Appetite

Library of Cheesemaking—A unique benefit of this club!

Scott and I joined the club in February of this year after a friend inspired us to make our own cheese. The meetings have been valuable opportunities to learn about the process, meet great people and taste some great cheeses. We have had some success with Cheve, Farmhouse Cheese, Crescenza and goat yogurt. We failed at Mozzarella and didn't pay attention to the Organic milk that was ultra-pasteurized. But it is a great adventure.

The Club's Library is a great benefit, especially for those of us just starting out. It gives members an opportunity to get going without having to invest a lot of cash up front. You can borrow equipment (draining baskets, forms, presses, spoons, thermometers, etc.) and books on Cheese making. Or order cheese cultures (Flora Danica, feta culture, rennet, etc.) for just \$1.00 a sample good for 2 – 4 gallons of milk. And the books listed below also give you a chance to see what you like.

So if you've joined to start making your own cheese the library can really be a way to kick off a project!

Mastering Basic Cheesemaking	Gianacis Caldwell
Mastering Artisan Cheesemaking	Gianacis Caldwell
Artisan Cheesemaking at Home	Mary Karlin
Home Cheesemaking	Ricki Carroll
The Cheesemaker's Manual	Margaret Peters-Morris
The Science of Cheese	Michael H. Tunick
Cheesemonger: A life on the wedge	Gordon Edgar
The Complete Encyclopedia of Cheese	Christian Callec

Here is a link to the Library spreadsheet. The tabs at the bottom get you to what you need.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19fLvqk26dKyUlf1Ay5E_IFhULYZ1rt8nk0SXir2R720/edit#gid=1491603828 .

Requests are generally filled at the monthly meetings. Simply request the items you'd like by sending an e-mail a week before the meeting to: qd-library-request@quesodiego.org.



Below are organizations who support Queso Diego. We hope you will support them as well! Click on the logos to get to their websites.

