

# QUESO DIEGO

## THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

*The (Almost) World Famous Grilled Cheese Meeting is coming!*

From our Club President:

Welcome to the first Queso Diego newsletter of 2025! We look forward to another exciting year of cheese-filled adventures. We're just a few months into the new year but have started off strong. In January, our VP, Lisa Gonzalez, gave a presentation on the California Cheese Trail. In February, we celebrated our 14th Anniversary with our annual Cheese and Bubbly pairing. In March, I spoke on Irish cheese.

Next up is our annual grilled cheese meeting on April 15. Later in April, we are invited to the launch of the CheeseSmith contest winner (Queso Diego's own Marci Richards!) at Anvil of Hope's 5th Anniversary Party on April 26. In May, the Cheese & Libation Expo takes place from May 16 to 18. We've arranged a discount code for the Expo - "quesodiego" - and please feel free to share it with friends. Expect more details on these and other events in the near future.

On a sadder note, we recently lost long-time Queso Diego member, Don Rutherford. Please keep Carol Rutherford and the rest of Don's family in your thoughts.

May your days be filled with all things cheese!

Deborah Flores (aka Deb F!)

Queso Diego meetings are the third Tuesday of each month. We meet at Alesmith, often in the Barrel Room or the upstairs area. Please always be prepared for a last minute change of location somewhere else on the premises, so bring a folding chair "just in case." Please also bring a contribution to the potluck, which starts at 6:30 PM and the meeting itself begins at 7PM. Homemade, but not commercial, alcoholic beverages are also welcome.



## A REMEMBRANCE OF DON RUTHERFORD

BY LARRY STEIN

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Purple pickled eggs,  
a small barrel of bourbon barrel aged stout,  
and sometimes an elaborate spread of caviar and vodka

... Don is in the house!

This past month we are saddened and mourn the loss of Donald Rutherford. Don, along with his loving wife Carol, were always present at the Queso Diego and Quaff get togethers. Don was a long-time member of Quaff and one of the original members of Queso Diego, having joined at our first meeting in 2011. Don was instrumental in managing and promoting the educational component of QD. I was lucky to work with him putting together so many classes, first at his church, and then at Citizen Brewers, where Judd welcomed us into his facility. Don's generosity extended way beyond the club.

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A personal story. When our restaurant, Steins, was in trouble Don approached me at one of the meetings. He handed me a check for \$10,000. He said he heard we could use it and maybe this could help. No talk of loans or payback, he just hoped it would help. That's the kind of person Don was. I didn't keep the check but was always grateful for his show of compassion and assistance. I don't know for sure, but I suspect there are others who would have similar stories of his generosity.

At the "sometimes annual" Quaff November meeting we would do an event called Gadgets for Brewing. Don always had some wild device or adapter to something to something. Often it involved a bicycle tire valve and a plastic bottle. You could always count on him to have some jerry-rigged device, and it always worked.

Don was always game for an adventure. One fond memory was the Queso Diego Valle de Guadalupe trip in June of 2019. The day before the trip was the Tijuana Beerfest. Chris Banker, Don, Carol, and myself went a day ahead to attend the festival. Being silly Americans, we showed up when the fest was supposed to start, so I think the four of us were the only ones there. Chris and I both commented later on how we only hope we enjoy ourselves and continue to come to these events when we get a bit older, like Don and Carol. I believe they outlasted Chris and me. They are our model for enjoying life.

Towards the end Don would come to our meetings or events with his oxygen tank. Nothing was going to get between him and enjoying the moment. Don never seemed to be sad at what was happening and just went with the flow. Always a happy spirit.

Even though I've moved away I'll miss Don. I'm sure our hearts go out to Carol along with our hope she'll remain an active member with us.

Take care Don.

-Larry

A Memorial/Celebration of Life is planned for April 21, details when available

## LEARNING THE LINGO (AT LEAST UP TO THE LETTER "C")

The A-B-C's of cheesemaking, with subsequent letters to follow in other newsletters - with thanks to Tetra Pak, which provides processing solutions and equipment for all types of cheesemaking.

**Acid curd** The custard-like state that milk is brought to when a high level of acidity is created. The acidity is produced by the activity of starter culture bacteria, and it precipitates the milk protein into a solid curd.

**Acidity** The amount of acidity (sourness) in the milk. Acidity is an important element in cheesemaking and is produced by cheese starter culture bacteria.

**Aging** A step in cheesemaking in which the cheese is stored at a particular temperature and relative humidity for a specified amount of time in order to develop its distinct flavour.

**Albuminous protein** Protein in milk which cannot be precipitated out by the addition of rennet. Albuminous protein, or whey protein, remains in the whey and is precipitated by high temperatures to make Ricotta.

**Bacteria** Microscopic unicellular organisms found almost everywhere. Lactic acid producing bacteria are helpful and necessary for the making of quality hard cheeses.

**Bacteria linens** A red bacterium which is encouraged to grow on the surfaces of cheeses like Brick or Limburger to produce a sharp flavour. Called B. linens by its closest friends.

**Bacterial-ripened cheese** A cheese upon which surface-bacterial growth is encouraged to develop in order to produce a distinct flavour. Brick and Limburger are examples of bacterial-ripened cheeses.

**Cheese colour** (you think maybe they're British?) A colouring added to the milk prior to renneting which will impart various shades of yellow to the cheese. Most colouring is a derivative of the annatto tree.

**Cheese salt** A coarse flake salt. A non-iodized salt is the most desirable type to use in cheesemaking. [Editor's note: important to be aware that many salts differ in weight for a given volume so be consistent with your brand choice.]

**Cheese starter culture** A bacterial culture added to milk as the first step in making many cheeses. The bacteria produce an acid during their life cycle in the milk. There are two categories of starter culture: mesophilic and thermophilic.

**Cheese wax** A pliable wax with a low melting point which produces an airtight seal which will not crack. Most hard cheeses are waxed.

**Clean break** The condition of the curd when it is ready for cutting. A finger or thermometer inserted into the curd at a 45-degree angle will separate the curd firmly and cleanly if the curd has reached that condition.

**Cooking** A step in cheesemaking during which the cut curd is warmed to expel more whey.

**Curd** The solid custard-like state of milk achieved by the addition of rennet. The curd contains most of the milk protein and fat.

**Cutting the Curd** A step in cheesemaking in which the curd is cut into equal-sized pieces.



## How Do Cheese Professionals Think about Knives?

This rather long but interesting back-of-the-counter view of cutting cheese, presented by the Academy of Cheese with help from the Dutch knife firm Boska is contributed to the Newsletter by Lisa Gonzalez. Hopefully the link and code will continue to work long enough for you to view it. Totally worthwhile to use the closed captions, some of which are simply hilarious. Use code **bY4BaK8!**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/T4-kZmjKysmKwsXJjW00rgNr1fL\\_\\_VbzkS36UNIQ2TXH6OrFuuGkIpvbc8OxLIfsHfuaMHEcI1\\_FEy5j.B7a69NNBga9rdigY?utm\\_campaign=Masterclass%20%20Christmas%20Cheese%20Masterclass%20%20Savencia%20Nov%202024&utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8AedczD3NgYY1iLWiptgBLPVoGG0mSngTi6FVIa7oWcvXBblGNhEc25pqY3ZetDC\\_w-G3nYTFI7QBAGEMa-8rm5FbdXU\\_ZCTGJQjrpMHW-xuIWow&\\_hsmi=351414369&utm\\_content=351414369&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/T4-kZmjKysmKwsXJjW00rgNr1fL__VbzkS36UNIQ2TXH6OrFuuGkIpvbc8OxLIfsHfuaMHEcI1_FEy5j.B7a69NNBga9rdigY?utm_campaign=Masterclass%20%20Christmas%20Cheese%20Masterclass%20%20Savencia%20Nov%202024&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8AedczD3NgYY1iLWiptgBLPVoGG0mSngTi6FVIa7oWcvXBblGNhEc25pqY3ZetDC_w-G3nYTFI7QBAGEMa-8rm5FbdXU_ZCTGJQjrpMHW-xuIWow&_hsmi=351414369&utm_content=351414369&utm_source=hs_email)



## **And in the Not-Such-Grate-News-Department, a study finds cheese made with raw milk may contain active bird flu virus...**

The study, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, was done by scientists at Cornell University and funded by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the state of New York.

Scientists already discovered that raw milk can harbor the infectious H5N1 bird flu virus, but now there's a new study on its capabilities that has health officials concerned.

Researchers found that the bird flu virus is also stable and still infectious in cheese that has been made with raw milk despite being aged for months at a time.

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Raw milk cheeses are made with milk that hasn't been heat-treated or pasteurized yet. Regulations in place require the cheese to be aged for at least 60 days and — unlike raw milk — cheese made with raw milk can be sold across state lines.

The Cornell study involved making cheese with milk that had been spiked with the active bird flu virus under different pH levels in the acidic range.

The tests showed the infectious virus remained throughout the cheese-making process, the study said.

The findings raise concerns about food safety.

“Our study highlights the potential public health risks of consuming raw milk cheese, underscoring the need for additional mitigation steps in cheese production to prevent human exposure to infectious virus, the researchers wrote. “Although the infectious dose of the virus to humans is not known, ingestion of contaminated raw dairy products repeatedly may increase the probability of infections.”

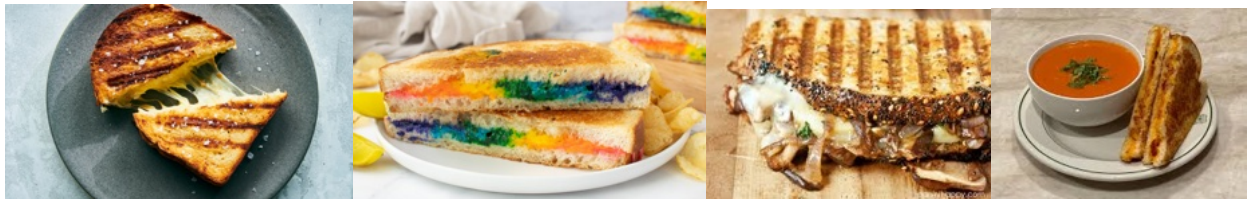
There's a variety of cheeses that are made with raw milk including Parmigiano Reggiano, comte and raclette.

# ADD THESE EVENTS TO YOUR CALENDAR!

Tuesday, APRIL 15th is the

## ANNUAL GRILLED CHEESE EXTRAVAGANZA QUESO DIEGO MEETING!

Brainstorm your wildest or most nostalgic creations, form teams, home prep your cheese and other ingredients as much as possible, bring (if you have them) tables, non-electric stoves and other cooking essentials, then wow and delight your fellow fromagineers at the cheese event that made Ed join the club!



And.....

**SATURDAY**

**April 26th**

**1-3:30 PM**



Join Peter and Vicky Zien in celebrating the 5th anniversary of their special charity Anvil of Hope at AleSmith. Anvil of Hope is literally changing the school experience of inner city kids by engaging them in sports and break dancing! This is also the release date for the Epic Cheese Challenge Winning Cheese created by Marci Richards and crafted by Peter and Marci. Taste, sip, celebrate, support, break dance, enjoy and take home a wedge of a very special edition hand crafted cheese!

**MAY 16-18** THE QR CODE BELOW or DISCOUNT CODE

QUESODIEGO SAVES YOU \$15 at CHEESE & LIBATION EXPO 2025 & EARNS OUR CLUB A NICE DONATION FROM THE C&L FOLKS! IT'S OK TO SHARE CODE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY BUT SIGN UP EARLY SINCE THE CODE MAY BE WITHDRAWN AS THE EVENT GETS CLOSER

# CHEESE & LIBATION

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## Chris Banker On

### “Americanizing” Different Cheeses



*“The basic idea is that you can emulsify nearly any meltable cheese into something with a texture and meltability like American cheese, with the help of some sodium citrate. Here’s my process for a 2 lb loaf (about a 1 lb loaf pan)”*

1. Shred about 2 lbs of cheeses of your choice. Good candidates are cheddar, swiss, gouda, jack, colby. Some mixes that work well: 85% swiss to 15% gouda for a swiss, 75% extra sharp cheddar to 25% gouda for a sharp cheddar.
2. Grease an appropriately sized loaf pan, I use this: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0029JQEIC>
3. To a medium-sized pot, add about 1/2 cup of water and 2 Tbsp of sodium citrate\* and stir to dissolve over medium heat
4. Optionally add some heavy cream, I’ve been using 1/2 cup. This adds extra creaminess. You can likely add a lot more and still have it work, if you desire a really rich, creamy cheese. 35% liquid is considered the limit of where it might start be a thick sauce vs sliceable cheese.
5. Stir in shredded cheese slowly, 1 fistful at a time, stirring constantly. Try to have the previous addition mostly melted before adding more. Medium heat is ok, but turn down if it starts to boil around the edges.
6. Once all cheese is added, continue stirring until all cheese is dissolved and the mixture is smooth like melted Velveeta.
7. Pour into prepared loaf pan and cover with plastic wrap.
8. Refrigerate until set, then loosen edges with a knife and then tap it out onto a cutting board, slice as desired or use in dishes calling for velveeta.

Here’s a calculator that someone made: <https://sauce.squirrel.org/>

\*Sodium citrate can be found on Amazon and is generally recognized as safe by the FDA. This is a good quantity to price ratio: <https://www.amazon.com/Sodium-Citrate-Powder-Ounce-Spherification/dp/B07NF4B3Y7/> or you can also use alka-seltzer (aspirin-free, unflavored) as a source of sodium citrate. <https://www.serious-eats.com/alka-seltzer-cheese-sauce-recipe-8643844>

# Irish Soda Bread with Raisins and Caraway

credit: Bon Appétit

Patrice Bedrosian of Brewster, New York, writes: "In the days that followed September 11, 2001, I — like so many Americans — gravitated toward roast chicken, meat loaf, and anything that brought comfort and ease to my home. You see, my stepbrother, Jerry O'Leary, a 34-year-old chef working at Cantor Fitzgerald's corporate dining room in One World Trade Center, was among the many victims on that terrible day.

"I feel quite certain that Jerry's love for cooking stemmed from his mother, Julie Lestrage. And as long as I can remember, she has always had something delicious waiting for my family whenever we visit.

"I would like to share a recipe that Julie has given to me. My hope is that you will, in turn, share it with my fellow readers, encouraging them to enjoy this delicious and comforting Irish bread, to smile, and to remember the love between a mother and a son."

Offer this easy-to-make bread with plenty of butter and your favorite jam.

## Ingredients

5 cups all purpose flour  
1 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into cubes, room temperature  
2 1/2 cups raisins  
3 tablespoons caraway seeds  
2 1/2 cups buttermilk  
1 large egg

Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously butter heavy ovenproof 10- to 12-inch-diameter skillet with 2- to 2 1/2-inch-high sides. Whisk first 5 ingredients in large bowl to blend. Add butter; using fingertips, rub in until coarse crumbs form. Stir in raisins and caraway seeds. Whisk buttermilk and egg in medium bowl to blend. Add to dough; using wooden spoon, stir just until well incorporated (dough will be very sticky).

Transfer dough to prepared skillet; smooth top, mounding slightly in center. Using small sharp knife dipped into flour, cut 1-inch-deep X in top center of dough. Bake until bread is cooked through and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Cool bread in skillet 10 minutes. Turn out onto rack and cool completely. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Wrap tightly in foil; store at room temperature.)

These organizations support Queso Diego. We hope you will support them as well! Many of these organizations will give you a discount when you mention Queso Diego!



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Cheese Shop & Cafe

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the word on cheese  
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