



Smoked Cheeses

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QUESO DIEGO
THE SAN DIEGO CHEESE CLUB

A decorative graphic of smoke or steam rising from the left side of the slide, rendered in grayscale. It consists of several flowing, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and texture, framing the title and list on the right.

Outline

- Reasons to smoke cheese
- History
- Smoked cheese styles
- Woods to smoke with
- How to smoke cheese
- Smokers and DIY options
- My Setup and Process
- Pairings, Recipes, Other things to smoke
- Q&A



Why Smoke Cheese?

Why would you smoke a perfectly good cheese?

- Change flavor profile
 - New and exciting flavors
 - Turn ordinary cheese into something special
- Preserve
 - Antimicrobial, Antioxidant Properties
- Textural Changes

History of Smoked Cheese



- Fiore Sardo - Bronze Age ~1200 BC
- Records of Roman smoked cheeses
 - Pliny the Elder - 77 AD
- Romans were known to have smokehouses for cheese
 - Larger homes had “Careale” - smoke rooms
- Gouda since 1100’s, likely smoked early in its history
 - Initially for preservation

Cheeses to Smoke

- Needs to hold together - at least semi-firm
 - Soft cheeses are likely to fall apart
- Softer hard cheeses will tend to take on flavor more readily than very hard ones
 - E.g. Young Gouda
- Limitations are minimal, so there are lots of choices



Spotlight Cheeses:

Home-Smoked Style Comparison

- Home-Smoked with Cherrywood, 2.5 hrs
- Aged 2 weeks
- 4 Cheeses:
 - Kirkland Gouda
 - Jarlsberg Swiss
 - Coastal Cheddar
 - Le Gruyere



Traditional Smoked Styles

Smoked
Gouda

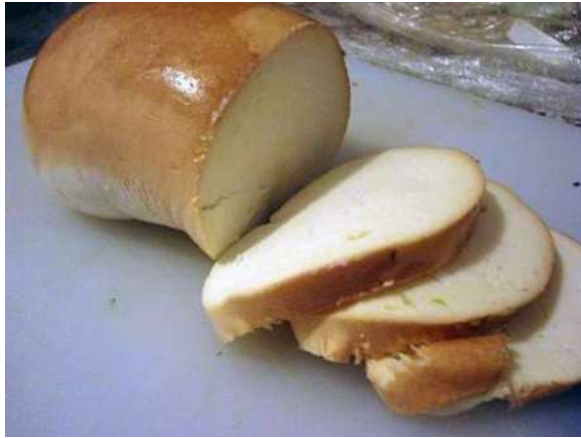


Smoked Cheddar
(USA, England)



Traditional Smoked Styles (2)

Smoked Mozzarella
(Italy)



Rauchkäse
(Germany)



Traditional Smoked Styles (3)

San Simon DOP
(Spain)



Earliest record - 1857

Fiore Sardo DOP
(Italy)



Dates back to Bronze Age,
~3000 years ago

Modern Smoked Cheeses

Rogue Smokey
Blue



Applewood
Smoked Swiss



A decorative graphic of smoke or steam rising from the left side of the slide, rendered in grayscale.

Which Woods Work Well

Common Smoking Woods:

- Alder - Light, slightly sweet
- Hickory - strong, pungent
- Mesquite - strong, can overpower
- Cherry, Apple - mild, fruity, slightly sweet
- Oak - moderate - between fruit woods and hickory
- Maple - mild
- Pecan - spicy, nutty



Which Woods Work Well (2)

- Avoid: Cedar, Cypress, Elm, Eucalyptus, Pine, Fir, Redwood, Spruce, Sycamore
- Great for cheeses: Fruit woods, hickory, oak
- Blend different woods for complexity

Hands-On: Wood Samples - Pellets

Spotlight Cheeses:

Home-Smoked Woods Comparison

- Home-Smoked, 2.5 hrs
- Aged 2 weeks
- Kirkland Gouda
- 2 Woods:
 - Cherrywood
 - Hickory



A decorative graphic of smoke or steam rising from the left side of the frame, rendered in grayscale with varying opacity to create a sense of movement and depth.

How to Smoke Cheese

- (Optional) - Put cheese in freezer briefly to help prevent melting during smoking
- Remove wax, if applicable, and cut into chunks
- Put cheese in smoker and start cold smoking
- Smoke to desired flavor - 1 hour to 12 or more hours

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide showing stylized smoke or steam rising and swirling upwards in shades of gray.

Smoking Temperature

- Must be “cold smoked”
- As low as possible to avoid melting / sweating
- Below 90F - fat melting point
- Avoid creating excess heat
- Smoke at night during cool weather
- Put a pan of ice below cheese
 - Note: paper towel underneath

A decorative graphic of smoke or steam rising from the left side of the slide, rendered in shades of gray and white, creating a sense of movement and texture.

Aging

- Smoked cheeses benefit from aging weeks to months after smoking
- Ideally vacuum sealed
- Helps mellow and disperse flavor
- Optional, but beneficial



Additional Treatments

- Optional, preferred by some
- Soak cheese in beer, wine, or spirits prior to smoking
- Glaze with maple syrup

Spotlight Cheeses:

Home-Smoked Age Comparison

- Home-Smoked, 2.5 hrs
- Cherrywood
- Cheese: Jarlsberg Swiss
- Aged 2 weeks vs 1/2 day
- Young cheese finished at 1am this morning



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide showing a thick, dark plume of smoke rising and curling upwards, with lighter, wispy smoke trailing behind it.

Inexpensive Smoker Designs

- Requirements
 - Must generate smoke without significant fire/heat (cold smoker)
 - Needs to be a relatively enclosed smoking space
- Lots of Options
 - Offset Firebox Smoker
 - Pellet Tubes/Trays
 - DIY Options
- Many more expensive solutions

Smoker Designs - Offset Firebox

- Common design, inexpensive versions available starting around \$100
- Lots of uses
- Burns wood chips or chunks



Smoker Designs - Pellet Tube

- Wood pellet burning smoke generator
- Can be used to turn a grill or hot smoker into a cold smoker
- Separates temperature from smoke generation
- < \$10

Hands On: Pellet Tube



Smoker Designs - Pellet Tray

- AMNPS (A-Maze-N Pellet Smoker) is a very popular option
- Load up “maze” with wood pellets
- Can smoke for about 12 hours on a full tray
- About \$30



Hands On: AMNPS

Smoker Designs - DIY Soldering Iron

- DIY design from soldering iron
- Electric smoke generator
- Soldering iron, tin can



Smoker Designs - DIY Pan and Bin

- DIY design from household materials
- Smoke pan, dryer hose, plastic bin



Smoker Designs - Cocktail Smoker / Cloche

- Expensive, but useful for other things too
- Can only smoke small amounts



**Hands On: Breville
Smoking Gun**

Smoker Designs - Bix's Kamado



Smoker Designs - Bix's Kamado (2)



My Process (1)

- Pellet Smoke Tube
 - Dry pellets in microwave - 2-3x 1 min
 - Fill about $\frac{2}{3}$ with pellets and light with blowtorch
- Cheese Prep
 - Cut into pieces of about 2x2x6 inches



My Process (2)

- Smoker Prep
 - Masterbuilt 40" electric smoker
 - NOT turned on
 - Smoke tube on bottom rack
 - Tray of ice on next rack if needed
 - Paper towels under ice tray
 - Cheese on upper 2 racks
 - Small fan blowing into wood chip feed hole



My Process (3)

- Smoking
 - Smoke for 2-3 hours for most cheeses
 - Check occasionally for steady smoke coming out of top vent
 - Flip once, rotate shelves once (optional)



My Process (4)

- Finishing
 - Enjoy a piece fresh - find the softest, gooiest!
 - Put on plate or tray in fridge overnight
 - Vacuum bag 1-4 pieces ea next day
 - Or ziploks or plastic wrap
 - Age for days to months



Spotlight Cheese: Rogue Smokey Blue



- Rogue Creamery
- Central Point, OR
- Organic Cow Milk
- Roquefort-style Blue
- Cold smoked 16 hours with hazelnut shells
- Cave-aged 90 Days
- First west-coast blue and first smoked blue (1954)



A decorative graphic of smoke or steam rising from the left side of the slide, rendered in shades of gray.

Smoked Cheese Pairings

- Powerful smoke flavors work well with powerful pairings
 - Make sure beverage can stand up
- Roasty stouts and porters
- Malty or smoky beers, crisp or smoked lagers
- Wines: bold reds, aggressive whites
- Scotch, Bourbon, Rye

While You're Smoking

- Things to add into smoker or smoke after
 - Ice (water)
 - Salt
 - Nuts
 - Hard-boiled eggs
 - Olive oil
 - Butter
 - Maple Syrup
 - Tofu
 - Peppercorns
 - Cured Salmon





Recipes Using Smoked Cheeses

- Smoked Mac 'n Cheese
- Chicken Stuffed with Smoked Cheese
- Smoked Cheese Lasagna
- Penne Primavera with Smoked Gouda
- Grilled Cheese and other sandwiches
- ... and many more ...
- Can replace regular cheese in any dishes where smoke will fit the flavor profile



Resources and Links

- [Cold Smoking Cheeses](#) Facebook Group
- [Pellet Smoke Tubes](#)
 - \$8 or 2 for \$13 right now. Search on Amazon, as they are all similar and there are constantly deals
- Wood Pellets
 - Costco carries big Traeger bags
 - <https://bbqpelletsonline.com/>
 - <https://midwestbarrelco.com/products/bourbon-barrel-bbq-smoking-wood-pellets>

Questions?

