

News, lore and bite-sized reviews

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Dog Days of Cheese

As those of us in the biz are well aware: come summer, cheese consumption plummets. Winter's incautious wine-and-cheesing and lipid-laced casseroles are behind us. We entertain around the grill, and give greens pride of place. No one's hungry enough to face a cheese board, least of all one featuring sweaty, warm wedges. But while it's fine to shelve the fondue set, it would be rash to abandon all of our cheesy habits just because the sun is shining.

Here are a few tips for best seasonal enjoyment....

Think Fresh

Young cheeses are typically high in moisture, and appetizingly tangy with butter, citrus and mineral notes. These are perfect along with other bright, juicy flavours when refreshment is a priority.

Ewenty Sheep Milk Feta and Watermelon Serve contrasting ivory and pink slices with a drizzle of pomegranate or balsamic vinegar and plenty of slivered mint.

Bella Casera Burrata and Haricot Beans Blanch thin green beans and toss with roasted red pepper strips, lemony gremolata and toasted pine nuts. Side with a generous portion of the supple mozzarella and its oozy, creamy centre.

C'Est Bon Organic Chèvre Toasts on Gazpacho Toast baguette rounds, rub with a cut garlic clove, drizzle with best olive oil and apply a thick smear of fresh chèvre. Float on a bowlful of chunky gazpacho.

Think Extreme

Offer cheeses with intense, super-rich flavours and textures in modest, high-impact portions, where they're sure to pique even the most heat-stroked appetites.

Chabichou de Poitou and Heirloom Tomatoes Macerate a platter of sliced multi-hued tomatoes with a bit of brandy, a pinch of sugar and a grind of black pepper. Dress with walnut oil, white wine vinegar and tarragon, and a flourish of coarsely grated aged chèvre. Toasted walnuts to top.

Blue Haze Lamb Burgers Bury a nugget of sweet and sultry smoked blue inside your well-seasoned lamb patties before they hit the barbecue. Don't tell anyone.

Délice de Bourgogne Ice Cream Add a half cup of rindless triple-cream cheese to your favourite French vanilla ice cream recipe and freeze as usual. Nestle a mini-scoop in the centre of a warm spiced baked peach sprinkled with amaretti crumbs.

Stay hydrated

Say goodbye to big burly reds, and get acquainted with the following ultra-quaffable, cheese-flattering libations.

Iced fruit tea Black currant or raspberry black tea, brewed strong and unsweetened, provide palate cleansing tannins to counter full-fat cheeses

Sparkling cider Traditional and so tasty with English cheddar or Normandy Camembert

Pink beer Dieu du Ciel's fabulous Rosée d'Hibiscus is gorgeous and tart – just right with goat milk cheddar

Bracing whites Mouth-watering, flavour-filled summer faves like Albariño, Moschofilero and Rueda play nicely with salads and fresh or herbed cheeses

Icy sweets Well-chilled Pineau des Charentes, Tawny Port or Verdelho Madeira works a charm with an after-dark dessert of piquant blue, dried apricots and toasted hazelnuts

In My Fridge

More Canadiana for summer cheese fans...

Brebette is a dainty little round of sheepy goodness. Velvety rind and chalky core deliver yeasty, citrusy flavours. Perfect with Belgian-style Witbier or traditional method bubbly.

Alpindon is a BC Alpine cheese that trumpets its raw milk, summer pasture status with gusto. Sweet and nutty to start, with an assertive, salty, savoury finish. Complete the picture with a glass of spicy Saison, or big, blowsy Grenache.

Avonlea Clothbound Cheddar is an heirloom-style cheese with a pronounced tang and rich, buttery, barnyardy undertones. IPA, all the way! If wine is de rigueur, choose Niagara Cab Franc or aspiring Bordeaux Rouge.

On Calendar

A bit of work, and a lot of fun gathering cheese tales for fall...

July 17

Top of the Shop http://leslievillecheese.com/school_north.php

Leslieville Cheese Market North. 10 Sydenham Street, Flesherton, ON.
519-924-9900. 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Aug. 20

Say Cheese, Say Cheers: Dog Days of Summer Beer and Cheese

<http://www.blackcreek.ca/events/event.dot?id=82721>

Black Creek Pioneer Village. 1000 Murray Ross Parkway. 416-667-6284.
7 p.m.

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