


Heightened Taste

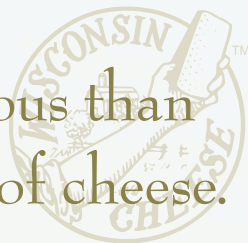


CHEESE PAIRING GUIDE





Few foods are more luxurious than
an expertly crafted piece of cheese.



There are endless types of Wisconsin cheeses that you'll enjoy savoring, no matter your personal preferences for flavor or texture. Pairing each cheese with the perfect accompaniments enhances the overall experience.

Whether you choose a complementary pairing that brings out the natural characteristics of cheese, or you opt for a contrast that rounds out the overall experience, you'll achieve a heightened sense of taste and appreciation for one of the world's great culinary treasures — Wisconsin Cheese.



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Soft/Fresh

C H E E S E S



High in moisture content, soft/fresh cheeses are mild, rich and creamy. Many can be used as a spread or dip. Others, like Feta, are more crumbly.

Mascarpone

Rich, buttery and slightly sweet, Mascarpone is comprised of 70 percent milkfat, also called a triple crème. With a smooth and creamy texture, it is perfect for dipping.

Ricotta

Ricotta is creamy white with a slightly grainy curd and a mild hint of sweetness. It is available in nonfat to whole milk variations.

Feta

Wisconsin Feta is made with cow's milk and brined in salt water for a tart, salty flavor and a firm, crumbly texture.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Try Crescenza-Stracchino, a fresh, artisan original from BelGioioso. It has a mild flavor with a hint of tartness and a creamy, spreadable texture. Burrata, also from BelGioioso, is a Fresh Mozzarella filled with cream. It boasts a sweet, milky flavor and rich texture.





P A I R I N G S

Food

CANDIED RED GRAPEFRUIT RIND— Sweet, tart and beautiful. These candy-like gems balance the creaminess of Mascarpone and Ricotta.

Recipe:

1 cup water
2 cups honey
Peel from one grapefruit
(red if possible), cut into
1/4-inch thick pieces
1 cup granulated sugar

Combine water and honey in a saucepan, simmer over medium heat. Add grapefruit pieces, simmer for 40 min. Remove from heat and let grapefruit sit in honey syrup for at least one hour or overnight. Remove strips from syrup and roll in sugar. Store in an airtight container for one week.

HONEY AND MAPLE SYRUP— Honey has long been used as a pairing with cheese. Its viscosity blends well with creamier cheeses and its natural sweetness is an ideal contrast to salty cheeses. For a similar but updated pairing, try pure maple syrup.

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, SEA SALT AND BREAD— A classic Mediterranean pairing, this trio melds seamlessly with the flavors in Feta, bringing out the herbaceous qualities of the cheese.

EDAMAME— Salted, shelled edamame is buttery and addictive. It brings out the creaminess and complements the saltiness of many soft/fresh cheeses.

Beverage

CHENIN BLANC— Fruity, floral and herbal, this lively wine plays well against creamy cheese. Try Vouvray from the Loire Valley of France as well.

GREEN TEA— The earthy flavors of green tea add a hint of zest to soft, fresh cheeses.

Soft-Ripened

C H E E S E S



Soft-ripened cheeses feature a snowy-white, edible rind that ripens the cheese from the outside in. They are delicious at room temperature, but can also be served warm from the oven.

Brie

Rich and creamy, this ivory cheese features an earthy mushroom flavor that becomes more pungent with age.

Camembert

Camembert and Brie are virtually identical apart from their sizes. Some say that Camembert develops a more intense flavor.





P A I R I N G S

Food

WARM PISTACHIOS — Warming the nuts brings out the lushness of the cheese while the salt and crunch offer a delightful contrast.

Recipe:

Roasted pistachios,
shelled and lightly salted

Preheat oven to 200°F. Spread pistachios on an ungreased cookie sheet.
Toast nuts for 10 to 15 min. Serve warm with cheese.

SUN-DRIED TOMATOES — Chewy, sweet and rustic, oil-packed, sun-dried tomatoes offer an acidity that balances the richness of the cheese.

PICKLED WHITE ASPARAGUS — White asparagus is delicate and elegant. When pickled, its sweet and sour flavors provide a sharp contrast to the creamy earthiness of the cheese.

GINGER THINS — The flavor of ginger provides a surprisingly pleasing spice accent to the pairing, balanced by the sweet crispness of the cookie.

Beverage

CHERRY KRIEK BEER — Berries and cherries are a traditional pairing for soft-ripened cheeses. Try updating it with Kriek Beer, a sparkling and sweet Belgian Lambic with the intense flavor of fresh, ripe cherries.

KIR ROYALE — This French apéritif is a natural with a classic soft-ripened cheese. The black currant flavor blends with the cheese while the champagne cleanses the palate and prepares you for the next bite.

FORTIFIED WINE APÉRITIF — Fortified wines, such as Lillet, are making a big comeback. Made from a Bordeaux-style grape, they are low in acid, very appealing and a perfect complement to soft-ripened cheeses.

Blue-Veined

C H E E S E S



Blue-veined cheeses have gained popularity over the past decade for their distinct, piquant flavor. Their most distinguishing characteristic is a blue-to-grey streaking or marbling.



Blue

Sharp, salty and intense, Blue cheese is aged for 60 days for a bold and expressive flavor experience.

Gorgonzola

A bit more subtle than its cousin, Blue, Gorgonzola is aged 90 days to produce a softer, creamier texture with rich, earthy flavors.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Try Hook's Blue Paradise cheese, a luscious double cream cheese with bold, Blue flavors. Virgin Pine Native Blue from Carr Valley is a unique bandage-wrapped Blue cheese, cave-aged for more than nine months with a firm texture and sweet, piquant flavor. True Bleu from Maple Leaf boasts a savory blend of Aged Cheddar and piquant Blue cheese flavors in one irresistible cheese.



P A I R I N G S

Food

PRALINE BACON—Sugar-crusted bacon with a peppery kick contrasts the creamy saltiness of Blue cheeses. The mouthfeel is unforgettably lush and the flavor is addictive.

Recipe:

3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup almond meal (or ground
almonds, pecans or walnuts)
2 tsp. dry mustard
1 tsp. salt
12 slices thick-cut or slab pepper
encrusted bacon*

*If pepper bacon is not available, add two
tablespoons coarse ground black pepper to
sugar mixture.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Combine all ingredients but bacon in a wide, shallow dish. Dip
and press each slice of bacon in sugar mixture on both sides.
Lay bacon strips on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle
additional sugar mixture over the bacon slices in the pan.

Roast the bacon until the fat begins to render, about 6 min.
Rotate the pan front-to-back and continue roasting until the
bacon is crisp and brown, about 8 to 10 min.

Remove, cool and break or cut bacon into bite-sized pieces.
Serve warm or cold with cheese.

CARDAMOM ROASTED PEARS—Pears have long been enjoyed with Blue cheeses. Roasting the pears brings out their natural sweetness while the addition of cardamom provides a contemporary twist.

NUT BRITTLE—The classic cheese and nut pairing gets a new twist with the sweetness of a brittle.

CRYSTALLIZED GINGER—One of the most popular contemporary ingredients, crystallized ginger, evokes a spicy sweetness that stands up well to strong cheeses.

Beverage

CLASSIC GIN GIBSON—The spiciness of gin cuts the intense flavor of Blue cheese. A little vermouth and a pickled onion garnish add retro flair to a cocktail party.

CHOCOLATE STOUT—A bold, rich cheese and a bold, rich beer. The stout's toasty nut-like aroma and flavor complements Blue cheese perfectly.

Semi-Soft

C H E E S E S



Made from whole milk, semi-soft cheeses are known for their rich, buttery flavor and melt-in-your mouth texture. Many are infused with flavors such as dill and peppers.



Fontina

Mild and earthy, some styles of Fontina feature a slight nutty flavor and small, sporadic eyeholes. Fontina is often sold with a wax coating.

Havarti

Havarti is pale yellow in color with tiny eyeholes and a buttery, slightly acidic flavor.

Muenster

Mellow and savory, creamy Muenster is often served with its colorful orange rind. It is an excellent slicing cheese.

Monterey Jack

Monterey Jack delivers tartness with its creamy color and texture.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Italic[™], a BelGioioso original, is aged for two months with a rose-colored rind and creamy, earthy flavor. Crave Brother's Les Frères[®] and Petit Frère[™] are washed-rind, cave-aged cheeses with distinctly earthy, fruity flavors.

P A I R I N G S

Food



POACHED WINTER FRUIT COMPOTE — Cooking figs, quince, pears and apples with spices such as cinnamon and star anise creates both a sweet and savory profile that coaxes out both complementary and contrasting flavors in the cheese.

Recipe:

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup honey
Juice of one lemon
2 cups water or juice
1 cup dry or off dry white or rose wine
(juice may be substituted)
2 cinnamon sticks
6 whole star anise
6 allspice berries
2 bay leaves
4 to 6 apples, pears or quince (2-3 pounds),
peeled and quartered
1/2 cup dried plums, apricots or cranberries

Place the first nine ingredients into a pot and bring to a boil. When sugar has dissolved, reduce heat and add fruit. Cover and simmer, removing fruit with a slotted spoon as it softens.* Arrange the fruit in a glass bowl.

Once all the fruit has been removed, bring the poaching liquid to a boil and reduce it by half (5 to 10 min.). Taste; if necessary add more lemon juice to balance flavor.

Strain the syrup and carefully ladle over the poached fruit.

Serve warm or cooled with cheese. The fruit will keep in the refrigerator for about one week.

*The fruit should be tender but not mushy. Cooking times vary: 10 to 15 min. for dried fruit, 20 to 30 min. for pears, 30 to 45 min. for apples and one hour for quince.

ROASTED MUSHROOMS — Roasting mushrooms brings out their sweet and earthy nuances, making them an ideal pairing with mild, semi-soft cheeses.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS — Much like mushrooms, but more earthy, roasted asparagus brings out flavors that are a synergistic complement to semi-soft cheeses. The result is meaty, rich and mouthwatering.

SUGARED HAZELNUTS — Toasting hazelnuts heightens the texture contrast with cheese while enhancing their complementary buttery flavor and aroma. By adding a sparkling sugar coating to the nuts, the pairing becomes more complex, engaging every sensor in the palate.

Beverage

KIRSCH ROYALE — Kirsh, a fiery cherry brandy, offers a definitive flavor contrast that cuts through the richness of the cheese. Curb its harshness by adding just a splash to a glass of festive, palate-cleansing sparkling wine or champagne.

GEWÜRZTRAMINER — This slightly fizzy wine, with its Alpine origins, winter spice and fruit undertones creates a pairing that is simultaneously complex and refreshing.

Hispanic-Style

C H E E S E S



Hispanic-style cheeses are becoming more accessible. They are versatile and varied in texture and are perfectly suited to a wide range of sweet and savory accompaniments.

Queso Fresco and Queso Blanco

These fresh, moist white cheeses have a creamy, crumbly texture.

Asadero

This cheese has a creamy texture and slightly tangy flavor.

Cotija

Cotija is pressed and salted, giving it a dry, crumbly texture and flavor similar to Feta.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Inspired by traditional Spanish cheeses, Roth Käse's Solè GranQueso™ is aged for four to six months to develop a delectably sharp bite with a lingering sweet finish.



P A I R I N G S



Food

HOT PEPPER MANGO SALSA—The cool, sweet mango contrasted with hot peppers adds an exciting kick to Hispanic-style cheeses.

Recipe:

2 cups mango, peeled, cored and diced
1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
1 Tbsp. Jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced
1/4 cup red onion, finely diced

1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1 tsp. fresh ginger, grated
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1 Tbsp. cider vinegar
2 Tbsp. orange juice
Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl and blend. Refrigerate covered for at least 3 hours before serving with cheese. Keep refrigerated for up to four days.

MEMBRILLO PASTE—Membrillo is quince, a member of the apple family used predominantly in preserves. In Spain, Membrillo paste is traditionally paired with Manchego, making it an ethnic flavor adventure. Try something new by pairing it with Wisconsin Queso Fresco or Queso Blanco.

MARCONA ALMONDS—A Spanish delicacy, Marconas are larger, flatter and more crunchy and flavorful than traditional almonds. Try toasting them to add warmth and complement the nuttiness of the cheese.

ROASTED SPICED OLIVES—Olives marry well with virtually all Spanish-style cheeses. Update the pairing by roasting them. Their concentrated flavors bring out a slight sweetness in the cheese.

CLEMENTINES—Besides adding lovely color, the sweetness and acidity of clementines offset the cheese and refresh the palate.

Beverage

MEAD—Available in varieties from dry to sweet, this honey wine cuts the richness of the cheese.

CAVA—Cava is a Spanish sparkling wine made by the champagne method. It offers the same flavor complements and palate refreshers as champagne.

Semi-Hard

C H E E S E S



Cheeses in the semi-hard variety deliver a wide range of flavor profiles. These are firm cheeses that begin with a bit of chewiness before melting into a rich, creamy texture.

Cheddar

Younger Cheddars are rich and nutty with a smooth, firm texture that becomes increasingly complex and crumbly with age. Cheddar's natural color is creamy white, but can also be golden yellow with the addition of annatto, a tasteless, odorless vegetable coloring.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Try Cave-Aged or Applewood Smoked Cheddar from Carr Valley. Cave-Aged Cheddar develops a beautiful natural rind and earthy flavor during its slow aging process in open-air caves. Applewood Smoked Cheddar starts with a gentle rub of paprika on the rind of Aged White Cheddar. The Cheddar is then smoked over applewood to create a creamy flavor, with a touch of sweetness and perfectly balanced smokiness.



P A I R I N G S

Food

CRANBERRY-BEET HORSERADISH—The tannins in cranberries and beets work well with a complex, Aged Cheddar while the spiciness of horseradish cuts the creaminess.

Recipe:

1 can (16 oz.) whole cranberry sauce
1 jar (6 oz.) prepared beet horseradish
Sea salt, to taste

Optional: 1 to 2 Tbsp. light brown sugar

Combine the cranberry sauce and horseradish. Add salt to taste. For a sweeter relish, add 1 to 2 Tbsp. brown sugar. Chill and serve alongside cheese.

APPLE MUSTARD AND WATER CRACKERS—The tanginess of mustard and sweet acidity of apples are classic pairings with Cheddar. A celery flavored water cracker adds fresh flavor and texture.

RADISH WITH SMOKED SALTS—A spicy, crunchy cold radish is the perfect contrast to the richness of Cheddar. Salt adds smoky flavor notes and a granular crunch.

HONEY MAPLE KETTLE CORN—Artisan kettle corn adds a lightly sweet flavor and playful crunch to Cheddar—the perfect alternative to crackers.

Beverage

SPARKLING CIDER—The apple notes of cider blend playfully with Cheddar while the festive fizziness cleanses the palate.

SMALL BATCH BOURBON—Paired with an Aged Cheddar, bourbon complements well with its caramelized woody notes.

Alpine-Style Cheeses

An Alpine-style cheese is a traditional style originating from the mountainous regions of France and Switzerland. Its flavor tends to be leaner with nutty, woodsy and grassy undertones and includes varieties such as Swiss and Gruyère.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Pleasant Ridge Reserve from Uplands Cheese is a Beaufort-style cheese made with spring and summer milk. Grand Cru™ Gruyère Surchoix from Roth Käse is a washed-rind cheese.



P A I R I N G S

Food

ARUGULA PESTO—A spicy alternative to traditional basil pesto, arugula pesto presents a peppery contrast to the cheese.

Recipe:

4 cups (about 6 oz.) packed fresh arugula leaves*
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted**
2 Tbsp. shallots, chopped
Juice of 1/2 lemon
3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
Sea salt and pepper, to taste

Combine arugula and almonds in a food processor; pulse to chop. Add shallots and lemon juice and, while pulsing, drizzle olive oil in a steady stream until the pesto is thick and emulsified.

Add salt and pepper to taste; pulse to combine. Serve in a small ramekin, spooned over cheese or alongside cheese.

Pesto will keep several days in a sealed container topped with a thin layer of olive oil in the refrigerator.

*For a longer lasting, bright green pesto, quickly blanch the arugula by dropping it into a colander in boiling water for 10 sec.

Remove and immediately cool by placing the colander into a prepared ice bath. Remove and drain arugula well.

**To toast almonds, place nuts in a single layer in an ungreased shallow pan. Bake at 350°F for 5 to 10 min. Remove from pan to cool.

CHOCOLATE COVERED CHERRIES—Chocolate pairs well with more pungent cheeses. While the acid in the cheese complements the chocolate, the cherry lifts the palate with its sweetness.

COCOA NIB CHOCOLATE—Nibs give the purest chocolate flavor, intensifying the natural harmony between chocolate and pungent cheeses.

POMEGRANATE MOLASSES OR JELLY—Americans are discovering pomegranate, making it an extremely stylish ingredient. Its acidity works well with the cheese while the texture of molasses or jelly softens it.

Beverage

RYE AND CHERRY MANHATTAN—Single batch rye stands up well to the richness of the cheese while the sweet vermouth and cherry smooth out the tasting experience.

BELGIAN LAMBIC—Typically aged in wooden barrels, lambic is a wine-like beer that is often infused with fruit, making it a natural fit with Alpine-style cheeses.

Gouda/Edam

Made with whole milk, Gouda has a rich, buttery, slightly sweet flavor and smooth, creamy texture. It is traditionally covered with red wax.

Edam is made with part-skim milk, giving it a light, nutty flavor and smooth, firm texture.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

Try Vintage Van Gogh from Roth Käse, an artfully crafted cheese aged for a minimum of six months to produce its nuanced flavor with pronounced caramel notes.



P A I R I N G S

Food

SPICY PUMPKIN SEED BRITTLE—Spiced pumpkin seeds in a simple but trendy brittle elevate the cheese to a complex dessert that is creamy, crunchy, spicy and sweet.

Recipe:

1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
1 1/2 cups sugar
3/4 cup water
1/4 tsp. fine grained sea salt
3/4 cup (4 oz.) hulled spicy roasted pumpkin seeds “pepitas”
Optional: 1 tsp. red pepper flakes and/or 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

*If the syrup becomes granular during cooking, continue to cook until it remelts.

Stir together baking soda and melted butter; set aside. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper, set aside a second sheet the same size. Butter parchment on one side.

Combine sugar, water and salt in a heavy 2-quart saucepan; bring to a low boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; wash down any sugar crystals on sides of pan with a pastry brush dipped in cold water. Simmer syrup 10 to 12 min., until it reaches 240°F. Remove from heat; with a wooden spoon, add pumpkin seeds and pepper, if desired.

While stirring, return pan to medium-low heat; melt again until mixture turns amber brown and reaches 290°F.* Remove from heat; stir in butter-baking soda mixture with wooden spoon.

Pour mixture onto prepared cookie sheet; cover with second parchment sheet. Press the mixture with a rolling pin to 1/4-inch thick. Remove top layer of parchment; cool completely; crack brittle.

Store brittle between layers of parchment in a sealed container for up to two weeks.

PIQUILLO PEPPERS—This Spanish variety is the new red pepper en vogue. Its slightly sweet, spicy, wood-fired flavor pairs perfectly with Gouda.

COUNTRY HAM—Cut in small bits or serve sliced with flax bread, the saltiness of country ham fortifies the flavors of the cheese and makes both taste even better!

Beverage

OCTOBER OR CHRISTMAS ALE—The clove and cinnamon aromatics in these seasonal beers blend with the sweet and nutty flavors of Gouda and Edam.

OFF-DRY RIESLING—Low in acid, German rieslings pair well with a wide range of cheeses. The off-dry varieties are only slightly sweet and match perfectly with Dutch-inspired cheeses.

Hard

C H E E S E S



Hard cheeses are relatively low in moisture content with an inelastic texture.

The best styles tend to be well-aged and pack an intensely flavorful punch.

Asiago

A flavor blend of Cheddar and Parmesan, Asiago is pale yellow in color. Mild when young, it becomes sharp, nutty and more granular with age.

Parmesan

Similar to Asiago, Parmesan has a buttery, sweet, nutty flavor and granular texture that intensifies with age.

Romano

Romano is sharp, tangy and assertive. The most intense of the hard cheeses.

Pepato

Hearty and robust, this peppery cheese is similar to Romano, but is studded with whole peppercorns.

Wisconsin ORIGINALS

BelGioioso's American Grana® matures a minimum of 18 months to develop a deep, nutty flavor. An extra-long aging period of at least 20 months gives SarVecchio™ Parmesan from Sartori an intensely sweet, nutty flavor and a hard, granular texture. Bellavitano™ also from Sartori, has a hard, crumbly texture and intense, full flavor.

P A I R I N G S



Food

ROSEMARY HONEY PRESERVED ALMONDS—A toasted nut would be too strong with these intensely nutty cheeses. A sweet preserved nut is softer and milder. Rosemary infusion adds flavors that echo the Italian roots of these cheeses.

GRILLED FENNEL—When grilled, the anise-flavored fennel caramelizes while maintaining a crisp-tender texture. With a drizzle of truffle oil, this savory pairing is meaty, crunchy and decadent.

Recipe:

2 bulbs fennel, fronds removed, sliced into 1/3-inch thick slices
2 Tbsp. olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
1/4 cup white truffle oil

Heat grill to high. Brush the fennel with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium and grill fennel slices for about 4 min. per side or until slightly charred and softened.

Place fennel on a platter and drizzle with white truffle oil. If desired, season with additional salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature with cheese.

BALSAMIC VINEGAR—The combined walnut, green olive, vanilla, prune and gingerbread flavors found in a well-aged balsamic make a distinctively tangy and sophisticated pairing.

SPICED PUMPKIN BUTTER—Inspired by pumpkin ravioli sprinkled with Parmesan, this pairing mellows the intense flavors of the cheese for a comforting experience.

Beverage

NEBBIOLO—With the sweet fruit flavors of blackberries and cherries and high levels of acid and tannins, Nebbiolo wines like Barolo and Barbaresco marry perfectly with hard, tangy Italian cheeses.

PROSECCO—An Italian sparkling wine, Prosecco rounds out the flavors of hard cheeses. For extra flair, add a dash of juice, bitters, a sweet spirit or small batch aged vinegar to the wine.

*For more ideas
on pairing cheese with
food and beverages, visit.*

www.EatWisconsinCheese.com.



Outdo Ordinary™

