



Profiles of a Milk Type

Cow milk, goat milk, sheep milk... what's the difference? We often get this question across the cheese case and in cheese class. There are those folks who favor a specific one (ahem, you know who you are with your goat cheese obsession!). So what's all the fuss about? Well, generally speaking, each milk type lends itself to certain flavor characteristics. It's important to note that while we are discussing the milk types we are using general descriptors. What is amazing about the dairy animals that we celebrate is not only does each animal produce milk with different characteristics, but there are also unique attributes depending on what specific breed of animal is in the herd (ie Jersey versus Brown Swiss cows, Nubian versus Alpine goats, etc.). Also affecting the flavor profile are the cheesemaking and aging techniques employed to bring a cheese to its ideal state. So, those disclaimers aside, let's get back to describing milk type flavors.



Cow's milk cheese is arguably the most versatile and can really take on diverse flavors. Think about that herbaceous, nutty character of an Alpine-style cheese, or that sweet caramel finish on a nice aged Gouda, or the earthy, mustardy tang of certain Clothbound Cheddars. Or simply the clean, lactic taste of a fresh Mozzarella. All of these cheeses are often made from cow's milk and are so different, yet, for the most part, cow's milk cheese is known for exhibiting buttery, nutty, grassy notes. Another identifying trait of cow's milk cheese is the color of the cheese paste which will most likely have a straw to pale yellow hue (depending on whether the cheese was made from summer milk when cows graze on fresh grasses or later in the winter when they may be feeding on hay - yes, animal diet also plays a huge role in affecting milk flavor and quality!).

Then there are those folks who come begging for sheep's milk cheese because they're in love with that rich, velvety, nutty, and sometimes sweet flavor characteristic of the milk type. Old Chatham Sheepherding Company's Nancy's Camembert (made with sheep and a bit of cow milk) often graces our case, Bellwether Farm's San Andreas rotates in, and we're stocking Star Thrower Farm's Blue cheese right now. Regardless of the specific wheel, delving into a sheep's milk cheese often feels like a decadent indulgence as the fats in it luxuriously coat your tongue.



A striking contrast on a cheese board is the bright white paste of a goat's milk cheese. It's a distinctive whiter color, since goats digest and process the yellow beta carotenes found in grasses (while cows don't). Cheese made from goat's milk is often known for its acidic and tangy flavor profile sometimes accentuated by citrus notes. I often describe it as a nice, crisp zestiness that awakens your palate. Current selections in our case include CKC Fresh Chevre, Capriole's O'Banon, Pure Luck's Ste.Maure, Twig Farm's Washed Rind Wheel, Tournevent's Chevre Noir, Central Coast Creamery's Goat Gouda, and Pure Luck's Hopelessly Blue. (For an extra comparison, come try each of these in the above-mentioned progression to taste how the different styles, make processes, and aging create various flavor profiles.)

Lastly, although it's not nearly as prevalent in these parts, we also carry cheese made from water buffalo's milk. Our Mozzarella di Bufala, Quadrello di Bufala, and Blu di Bufala are some of our favorites. While each is unique, they all have a grassy and tangy flavor highlighted by a sort of wet hay, gamey taste. Even though each of these three cheeses is imported from Italy, there are a handful of American producers rising on the scene to make water buffalo's milk cheese here stateside.



So yes, some of you swear by a certain milk type. But for most of us, each is amazing in its own right and there's a time and place for all of them. As always, we welcome you to come into the Shop and taste for yourself.

New Cheese & Goodies

Virginia's Meadow Creek Dairy's **Mini-Grayson** has finally arrived to the shop! While the recipe is based on their award-winning Grayson (yes, that gorgeous vibrant orange-hued pungent square beauty!), they take a step further by washing this cheese with Highland Brewing Co. Oatmeal Porter, making this pint-sized cheese a perfect pairing with a pint of your favorite Porter or Stout.

Central Coast Creamery of Paso Robles, California, has had a special place in our case for quite a while now - and for good reason. (Think Goat Gouda and Seascape.) Their mission "is to deliver great cheese, to help with the movement to redefine the American palate, and to do so responsibly," by making world-class cheese using local milk from animals that aren't given additional hormones. The newest addition to their lineup is **Holey Cow**, a whole cow's milk cheese modeled after Emmentaler. Unlike its Swiss counterpart however, this cheese is only aged for about 2 months, giving it a pliable, semi-soft paste riddled with small holes and a sweet, nutty, and creamy flavor.

Boucher Blue is back! From the Boucher Family Farm in Vermont, this cheese is smooth, creamy and mild with undertones of chestnuts, sweet hay, and truffles. The original inspiration for this raw cow's milk cheese is the great blue Fourme d'Ambert, a customer favorite. However, over the years, it has become a true farmhouse cheese, unique to their farm.

Need additional ideas? Kelly recommends pairing our new **Red Onion Confit** from The Girl and The Fig in California with the Mini-Grayson and Boucher Blue. Come taste for yourself...

Cheese-y Events & News

Heads up! Our Fall Cheese Class schedule will be announced soon!

Cheesily Yours,

Kendall & John

Kelly, Brad, Courtney, Paul, and Victoria



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