

## **SAN FRANCISCO GUIDE TO LOCAL CHEESES**

### **ALL CHEESES AVAILABLE AT COWGIRL CREAMERY**

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*Cheesemonger's Blanket Recommendation for aged cheeses: Cold deadens the flavor of cheese, so let your cheeses sit out for at least an hour before eating in order to bring them to room temperature.*

#### **Cowgirl Creamery Crème Fraîche, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. If you were looking for it, this crème fraîche is a great excuse to stop using supermarket sour cream. Tangy in taste and buttery in color, crème fraîche can be added to soups, tossed with salads, or as a condiment for baked potatoes and tacos.

#### **Cowgirl Creamery Clabbered Cottage Cheese, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. I'm not a fan of cottage cheese at all but the enriching addition of clabbered cream to this small curd cottage cheese has made a convert out of me. Eat it alone, on the site of a plate of curry, or (horrors!) with a dish of peaches.

#### **Cowgirl Creamery Fromage Blanc, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. Made with whole milk, this take on "farmer's cheese" is a sublime replacement for the usual brick of Philly cream cheese. It can be used in many recipes -- eggs, mashed potatoes, cheesecake -- and can also be jazzed up with garlic and herbs, transforming this spreadable fresh cheese into a fantastic spread for bread and sandwiches.

#### **Cowgirl Creamery Mt. Tam, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. Soft, triple-crème cheese with a white bloom rind. Luxurious and buttery, this cheese also has lovely hints of fresh mushrooms in the smell and taste. Edible rind.

#### **Cowgirl Creamery Red Hawk, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. Soft, washed rind, triple crème cheese. Quite soft and velvety with a sticky, orange salt-water brined rind. More intense than the Mt. Tam with a full aroma and flavor. Edible rind.

#### **Cowgirl Creamery St. Pat, Pt. Reyes Station.**

Cow. Soft, whole milk cheese wrapped in nettles. The nettles impart a woody, braised artichoke flavor to the firm cheese. Edible rind.

#### **St. George, Matos Cheese Factory, Santa Rosa.**

Cow. Based on a Portuguese cheddar recipe, this semi-hard cheese is rich and slightly tangy. It melts and grates well and is a succulent addition to any California cheese plate.

#### **Vella Dry Jack, Sonoma.**

Cow. This semi-hard cheese is what can happen when you age classic Monterey Jack cheese. Nutty with a delicate caramel flavor, Dry Jack grates very well and would be an excellent substitute for Parmigiano-Reggiano. Dry Jack? Over pasta? Sensational!

#### **Vella Mezzo Secco, Sonoma.**

Cow. Mezzo Secco is a slightly younger Dry Jack. Semi-firm with more moisture than Dry Jack, Mezzo Secco's exterior is rubbed with olive oil and black pepper and makes for a great fondue cheese.

#### **Cypress Grove Humboldt Fog, McKinleyville.**

Goat. This ranks up there with as one of my favorite aged (3 weeks young!) goat cheeses. From the beautiful line of vegetable ash in the middle of the creamy pate, to the way the cheese oozes in from the rind the older it gets, I adore this cheese. Even if you think you don't like goat cheese, Humboldt Fog could make you eat your words.

#### **Cypress Grove Bermuda Triangle, McKinleyville.**

Goat. A little meatier than Humboldt Fog, Bermuda Triangle's double rind gives this soft cheese a deep, earthy texture and taste. Sliced into thin, flat triangles and served with green grapes or strawberries, Bermuda Triangle makes a delicious dessert.

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#### **Cypress Grove Lamb Chopper, McKinleyville.**

Sheep. Sweet and silky and totally addicting, the semi-firm Lamb Chopper is a sheep's milk Gouda. I tend to nosh on this cheese as is -- no bread, no crackers -- but I've heard tell of arugula and mandarin orange salads made sublime by thin spears of this cheese. The rind is wax, so don't eat it.

#### **Cypress Grove Midnight Moon, McKinleyville.**

Goat. The goat cheese twin of Lamb Chopper, Midnight Moon is an aged goat's milk Gouda. It has a nutty, rich taste and a beautiful ivory pate. With no barnyard taste in sight, Midnight Moon is another cheese to give those who think they don't like goat cheese.

#### **Redwood Hill Crottin, Sebastopol.**

Goat. This little mound of semi-firm, aged goat cheese is creamy, full-flavored and happily intense. Get 'em in three- or five-ounce rounds.

#### **Redwood Hill Bucheret, Sebastopol.**

Goat. The pate of this semi-soft aged goat cheese is buttery and rich and tastes best when spread thickly over a crusty hunk of sweet baguette.

#### **Redwood Hill Camellia, Sebastopol.**

Goat. Made in the style of camembert, this soft-ripened goat cheese gets wonderfully oozy and potent with age.

#### **Redwood Hill Chèvre, Sebastopol.**

Goat. I always keep a tub of this fresh goat cheese on hand. Whether I crumble it into salads, stir it into risotto, or just suck it off my finger, it's creamy tanginess satisfies an eternal yen inside of me.

#### **Point Reyes Original Blue, Point Reyes.**

Cow. This cheese really does come from happy cows who spend their days chewing succulent grasses and taking in the view of Tomales Bay. Its ivory white pate is shot with pungent blue, and this full-flavored California blue cheese turns plain roasted beets or brown rice salad into a major event in my house.