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# Cheese of the Week: Sainte-Maure de Touraine

This is a classic Loire Valley goat cheese



Raymond Hook

Sainte-Maure is an ash-rubbed goat cheese from France's Loire Valley.

Keywords Cheese Of The Week

By [Dan Myers](#), Editor



The Loire Valley in France is famous for a lot of things, especially wine and cheese, and Sainte-Maure de Touraine is one of the most famous of those cheeses. It's shaped like a small log, is ash-covered, has a straw running down the middle of it, and according to Hook, is one of the best pasteurized goat cheeses you'll encounter.

According to archaeological evidence, goats have been roaming the Loire Valley since well before the eighth century, and most likely their milk has been made into cheese for just as long. This cheese is formed into a log, rubbed with vegetable ash, and is aged for about three to five weeks. During this time, it develops a wrinkly (but still edible) exterior, and ages from the outside in, resulting in a luscious cream around the outside while maintaining that familiar tangy goat cheese texture on the inside. The flavor of this cheese is incredibly balanced, with lemony tang complemented by a buttery nuttiness.

Hook recommends eating this cheese straight-up for the table, in a salad, or on a baguette with fig jam. As for wine pairings, it's best to drink a wine from the Loire Valley with this cheese. "With the Loire, wines and cheeses are so definitive of the terroir that you're not sure if the wine was made to complement the cheese or the other way around," Hook said.

And if you've convinced yourself that you're not into goat cheese, he also advises that Sainte-Maure is a great place to start. "A lot of people say they don't like goat cheese," Hook added. "They just haven't had a great goat cheese like this one."