

Hooked on Cheese: Uncommon Chèvres

These lesser-known goat cheeses will seriously impress your guests



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By [Dan Myers](#)

Editor

One day last week while I was toiling away in the Cheese Lab, I got a call from my good friend Addie all the way from Louisiana. We hadn't spoken in ages so we had to catch up, but after chatting for way too long about SEC vs. Big 12 football, we got down to cheese talk. She is a huge fan of French goat cheeses, the classic cylindrical fresh [chèvres from the Loire River Valley](#) (the [Selles-sur-Cher](#) and [Sainte Maure](#) styles). However, at this point in her life as a gourmand, she felt like she needed to step up her game and try some chèvres that were slightly outside-the-box, the red-headed stepchildren of the goat cheese family.

"No problem," I said. "There are so many to choose from!" I made the following three suggestions:

[Chevre d'Argental](#): This is a goat's milk Brie-style cheese from the Rhône Alps area. It is made in a hexagonal form, a somewhat unique shape. It has a lightly salt-forward pleasantness, minimal animal flavor, and a great mouth feel; it's lush and creamy and screams for crispy un-oaked white wine. I suggested she pair it with pears, apples, stone fruits, fresh figs, or anything lightly sweet; a drizzle of honey would make its flavors pop. It is appropriate on a cheese plate or on a super fancy bagel.

[Le Chevrot](#): This is a small, cylindrical goat cheese made in the Poitou region of France. It has a tan, wrinkly rind with a slight white mold on it. Young and firm, this cheese has a distinct citrus element mixed with complex mineral notes. As it ages, it gets softer and takes on a mushroomy, earthy flavor. This is a favorite cheese of world-renowned cheesemonger [Steven Jenkins](#), and if it's good enough for him, it's certainly good enough for me! I suggested Addie pair this incredible cheese with a white ale or an apple cider.

[Bethmale Chèvre](#): An aged wheel produced in the mountainous Midi-Pyrenees region of France, this is a semi-firm, almost fudgy-textured cheese made by artisan cheesemakers at the [Fromagerie Jean Faup](#). It has distinct savory elements and minerality on the forward palate; flavorful, yet mild. It also has great melting properties and would be perfect on a grilled cheese with coarse-grained mustard, thinly sliced cornichons, and over-buttered, dark country-style bread. Simply presented on a cheese plate in lieu of more common goat cheeses is recommended as well.

Addie called me up again later that week after picking up my recommended chèvres and sharing them with her family. Her report: she and her husband loved the first two with wine and beer, and she'd eaten the Bethmale straight out of the cheese paper while getting ready to cheer her beloved LSU Tigers on to victory.

"Your team won big this weekend? It had to be the cheese!" I contended. Addie just laughed, but I think she may have secretly agreed.

You can follow Raymond's cheese adventures on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and his [website](#). Additional reporting by Madeleine James.

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