

Get a Clue about Goat Cheese

By [Wini Moranville](#) on September 23, 2013 12:30pm EST



This fine lady produces more than one style of cheese. Photo courtesy of Goat Cheeses of France.

newbie heading to the store and picking up *fresh* mozzarella—a great cow’s milk cheese that, alas, would make a lousy fondue.

The same goes for goat cheese. Not just any goat cheese will do for any recipe. And yet, with over 6,000 goat cheese producers in France, how do you choose the right one?

Life gets easier if you narrow it down to two main types that are most often used in cooking:



Fresh French goat cheese. Photo courtesy of Goat Cheeses of France.

Have you ever read a recipe that called simply for “goat cheese” as if any old kind of goat cheese could be used in a recipe? It’s crazy-making.

Think about it: What if recipe writers called for “cow’s milk cheese” as if there were only one kind?

Let’s take this nightmare even further: What if, say, a fondue recipe simply specified 2 pounds of cow’s-milk cheese. Such a thing could find a

1. Fresh Goat Cheese = Fresh Chevre

Sold in tubes in the supermarket, fresh goat cheese is so young that it has not yet developed a rind. It’s a good when served crumbled, in salads or as a topper to crackers.

However, if you’re cooking anything that calls for the goat cheese to be melted, skip this one. It may puff but it simply *will not ooze*. Move on to:



Semi-ripened goat cheese has a soft, (generally) edible rind and makes a great Warm French Goat Cheese Salad. Photo by Kristof de Loof via Flickr.

2. Semi-Ripened Goat Cheese = Soft-Ripened Goat Cheese = Semi-Aged Goat Cheese

Ah, friends, this is where goat cheese gets fun!

As goat cheese ages, air naturally dries out the exterior of the cheese, making it form a soft rind. Semi-ripened goat cheeses still have a chalky whiteness inside, but often a soft, oozy layer toward the exterior of the cheese. In the best cases, the flavor features the fresh tartness (of the chalky middle) with the fuller flavor and creamy lusciousness of that outer circle. It's a great cheese!

I love using this cheese for a warm goat cheese salad (*Salade au Chèvre Chaud*). But it's also great in most all

recipes that call for goat cheese that's to be warmed or oozy or melted in any way. A few examples:

- [Warm Goat Cheese Salad](#)
- [Fresh Goat Cheese Alfredo](#)
- [Spinach and Garlic Turkey Burger with Crottin](#)

For 90 percent of your recipes, that's all you really need to know. But just so cheese-freaks don't think I'm oversimplifying things, let's talk about just a couple more kinds of goat cheese you might spot at the market:



Hard to find but heavenly when you do: Bloomy Rind French goat cheese. A little like Brie or Camembert, but with something extra. Photo courtesy of Goat Cheeses of France.

Bloomy Rind Goat Cheese: This is also a semi-aged goat cheese, but the difference is that the cheesemaker coats the outside of the cheese with *Penicillium candidum*, the same mold used to make Brie and Camembert. That makes the rind soft, bloomy, and even a little fuzzy. I love serving this on a cheese tray. It also melts nicely—but watch it, because it can go from oozy to runny in seconds.

Ash-Covered Goat Cheese: What's that ash doing on my goat cheese? Fortunately, it's edible. In fresh chèvres, it helps cut down on the cheeses tartness, and adds a pretty speckle to its look.

Tomme de Chèvre: You don't often find these hard cheeses in the U.S., but when you do, use them for grating and on cheese trays. They're amazingly, irresistibly full flavored.

For more information on Goat Cheeses, head to the [Goat Cheeses of France](#) website and go as deep as you want to go.

PS: Tell us about your favorite way with goat cheese—and be sure *to tell us which kind you use!!*