

Cooking with Comté



From creamy fondues, to gooey grilled cheese, to billowy soufflés, there are countless ways to cook with Comté. We contacted cheese connoisseurs and chefs to find out how they are using Comté today at home and in restaurant kitchens. The responses were, well, mouthwatering!

"Anytime a dish calls for melted cheese, Comté is what I think of," says Laura Werlin, cheese expert and author of *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials: An Insider's Guide to Buying and Serving Cheese* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2007). "Unlike many other cheeses, Comté retains its flavor after it's melted." From gratins, to pastas, to grilled cheese and burgers (see Laura's grilled Turkey & Comté Burger on Page 3), Laura uses Comté anywhere that benefits from melted cheese. "The cheese is very diverse, you can match it with both savory and sweet items." Some of her favorite flavor pairings are caramelized onions, roasted fennel, pistachios and smoked foods such as bacon.

For Craig Hopson, Executive Chef at Le Cirque in New York City, "Comté has a nuttiness that other Alpine style cheeses don't have... it adds another element to my dishes." His signature Comté Cheese Soufflé (on the lunch menu at Le Cirque), for instance, is made simply with butter, flour, eggs and Comté. While he likes to pair Comté with earthy flavors such as roasted chicken and mushrooms (see his Comté & Mushroom Burger on page 3), one his favorite Comté pairings is actually a fish dish. Chef Hopson combines fillets of rouget (also known as red mullet) with Comté polenta, cubes of Comté, raw spinach and a lemon vinaigrette. The resulting dish is a vibrant balance of flavors—nutty, salty, sweet and acidic.

Balancing flavors is also key for Ryan Hardy, Executive Chef of Montagna at The Little Nell in Aspen, CO. He likes to incorporate Comté into a tartiflette—a hearty casserole from the Savoie region of France made with potatoes, bacon, and cheese—where Comté adds a nutty sharpness that balances the rich flavors of the dish. He pairs Comté with foods such as pears, walnuts,

clementines, charcuterie and preserves, but he also loves to eat it on its own. "For me, Comté is one of those cheeses that sings a high note in your head—first you experience the floral characteristics in the back of the mouth, followed by nutty characteristics and sweetness, finished with the crystalline bites and aromas that linger after you eat it."

Comté's unique aromas come from the region and tradition from which it's crafted. Made in the Jura Mountains of France from the milk of pasture-raised Montbéliarde and Simmental cows, Comté's diverse flavors are a direct reflection of the meadows where the cows grazed, the unique style of the affineur, or cellar master, (see Comté News, Spring/Summer 2008), and the time the cheese spent aging. In fact, the age of the cheese can play an important role when cooking with Comté. Younger Comtés (6-8 months) tend to be sweeter than older Comtés, with aromas of soft caramel and fresh hazelnuts. Since they have more moisture, younger Comtés melt slightly better than older Comtés, making them perfect for dishes such as macaroni and cheese, grilled cheese, gratins, fondue and even pizza.



Older Comtés display more nutty, earthy and citrus characteristics. Since they have less moisture and a more intense flavor, they're ideal for salads and cheese plates. Both Laura Werlin and Chef Hardy love to shave an older Comté (18-24 months)

over pastas, salads and crostinis as a finishing accent. "I love the power explosion in the mouth," explains Chef Hardy. Chef Hopson, however, likes to use an older Comté in cooked dishes such as stuffed chicken breasts, where the sharpness of the older cheese complements the milder flavor of the meat.

There are endless possibilities when it comes to cooking with Comté. If you have a favorite Comté recipe or cooking idea, we would love to hear it! Email us at contactusa@comte-usa.com. And be sure to check out www.comte-usa.com for more recipes.

Comté ("con – TAY") cheese ID

General information:

Origin: Jura Mountains
(Massif du Jura), France

Milk Type: Raw cow's milk

Cheese Style: Artisanal, pressed,
cooked, with natural brushed rind.

French AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) since 1958 and European Union Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) Certification.

- Delimited area of production: Doubs, Jura, Ain, elevation 1500-4500 ft.
- Milk must be produced by local cows of the Montbéliarde (95%) and Simmental (5%) breeds. There are approximately 112,000 Comté cows.
- Minimum of 2.5 acres of natural pasture for each animal.
- Cattle feed must be natural and free of fermented products and GMOs.
- Each *fruitière* must collect milk from dairy farms within a 17-mile diameter maximum.
- Milk must be made into cheese within 24 hours maximum of the earliest milking.
- Only natural starters must be used to transform the milk into curds.
- Wheels must be aged on spruce boards. Minimum aging is 4 months, generally 6-18 months and sometimes even longer.



Comté Cheese Association

will be at the next

Summer Fancy Food Show

in New York City, June 28-30, 2009

Booth #1957



On the Label

Rich in calcium, phosphorous, minerals and protein, Comté can play a very useful role in maintaining a balanced diet (the French have relied on Comté for over 1,000 years!). Made from the raw milk of pasture-raised cows (who are never treated with hormones) without additives or coloring agents, Comté is a natural, healthful and nutritious food. We'll eat to that.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 ounce (28g)

Servings Per Container varied

Amount Per Serving

Calories 120 **Calories from Fat** 80

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 9g **14%**

Saturated Fat 5g **27%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 30 mg **10%**

Sodium 90mg **4%**

Total Carbohydrate 0g **0%**

Dietary Fiber 0g **0%**

Sugars 0g

Protein 8g

Vitamin A 8% * Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 25% * Iron 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet

Comté is an excellent source of protein and contains all of the essential amino acids needed by the body for proper cell function

Despite the impression of saltiness when tasted, Comté is a cheese with very little salt

Comté also contains important vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin A, which is important for vision, and phosphorous, which helps build strong bones and teeth

A 1-ounce serving of Comté contains a full quarter of your recommended daily intake of calcium



Taste of Place

Vermont became the meeting ground for gourmets, activists, artisans and academics alike at Taste of

Place: A Dialogue Between France, Quebec and Vermont, hosted by Middlebury College and the University of Vermont (November 8-9, 2008). The conference was spearheaded by Amy Trubek, author of *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* (University of California Press, 2008), which explores how concepts of terroir, or place-based foods—so integral to France's food and wine culture—can benefit both cuisine and agriculture in the U.S. Jean-Louis Carbone of the Comté Cheese Association discussed Comté's AOC (Controlled Appellation of Origin) designation as a panelist in the seminar "How do France & Quebec support place-based food and drink." Local artisan producers of cheese, maple syrup, apples and other products from VT were also present to showcase their products. It was a stimulating and informative event—a mingling of cultures, minds... and palates.

Quebec Style Pancakes with French Comté and Vermont Maple Syrup



Prepare a plain, thick-style pancake batter. Stir in shredded Comté and shredded apples. Cook the pancakes on a hot griddle until golden brown on each side. Serve warm with a generous drizzle of Vermont maple syrup.

The flavors of the apples (acid), syrup (sweetness) and cheese (salty) create a harmonious and irresistible combination!

*Recipe from the CIGC

Burger Time

It's time to get grilling! These delicious Comté burger recipes are perfect for the season and are sure to delight any palate.

Turkey and Comté Burgers



By Laura Werlin, adapted from the book, *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2007)

Serves 4

4 English muffins
2 teaspoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 1/3 pound ground turkey meat (use dark or thigh meat, if possible)
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
6 green onions, finely chopped
1 teaspoon kosher salt
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
8 ounces Comté cheese, cut into 1-ounce slices or coarsely grated
2 beefsteak tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch slices

1. Set an outdoor grill to medium.
2. Butter the English muffins and grill until the butter has melted and the muffins are toasted. Set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the turkey, egg, mustard, onions, salt, and pepper and mix lightly. Form the mixture into 4 patties about 3/4 inch thick (they will be a little sticky). To help form the patties, handle as little as possible and wet your hands in between forming each patty).
4. Place the burgers on the grill, cover, and cook 3 to 4 minutes, or until the undersides are brown but not dark. Turn burgers, place 2 slices of cheese (or one-quarter of the grated cheese) on each burger, cover, and cook 2 to 3 more minutes, or until the burgers feel firm but still give slightly when pressed for medium rare. Cook about 2 minutes longer for medium or well-done. Serve with sliced tomatoes and extra Dijon on the side.

Mini Comté & Mushroom Burgers



By Craig Hopson, Executive Chef at Le Cirque restaurant, New York City

Serves 4 (2 burgers each)

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon butter
10-ounces assorted mushrooms

Salt & pepper
8 2-inch brioche buns or dinner rolls, halved and toasted
2 pounds ground beef
8 slices Comté Cheese, about 1/4 inch thick
Lettuce and tomato slices for serving

1. Cook the onions with the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and caramelized.
2. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large skillet and sauté the mushrooms for 5 minutes, or until tender. Season with salt.
3. Preheat the broiler.
4. Form the beef into 8 4-ounce burgers. Season each burger with salt and pepper on both sides. On a grill pan, cook the burgers on both sides to the desired doneness. Transfer the burgers to a baking sheet and top each with a spoonful of the mushrooms and a slice of the Comté cheese. Broil just until the cheese is melted.
5. Spoon some of the caramelized onions on the bottom of each bun. Place the burger on top, followed by the top bun. Serve the mini burgers with lettuce and tomato on the side.

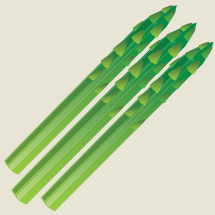


Comté on TheAtlantic.com's new Food Channel

Check out Comté's new ads on the **TheAtlantic.com's Food Channel** (www.food.theatlantic.com). The Food Channel, which launched in March 2009, features articles and blogs on everything food-related, written by some of the most insightful voices in the industry. Don't miss Daphne Zepos' cheese blog, found on the "Artisans" page, where she shares her "delights, obsessions, and daily ruminations" about hand-crafted cheeses. Zepos owns Essex Street Cheese Company and is a cheese consultant and educator.

Favorite Pairings with Comté

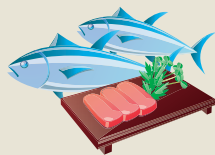
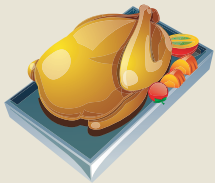
With its diverse aromas, Comté pairs wonderfully with a variety of foods and flavors, including the ingredients below. Taste and discover your own favorite pairings!



Apple
Artichoke hearts
Asparagus
Bacon
Black sesame seeds
Caramelized onions
Cauliflower
Celery
Charcuterie
Chicken
Clementine
Corn
Cranberry
Curry powder
Eggplant
Endive
Farro
Fish
Fennel
Fruit preserves



Grapes
Hazelnut
Herbs (rosemary, thyme, tarragon, basil, lavender)
Honey
Leeks
Mushrooms
Nutmeg
Pear
Pecan
Pistachio
Pomegranate
Pork
Potato
Rabbit
Spinach
Squash
Tomato
Turkey
Walnut



Some more cooking ideas...

- Add shredded Comté to your favorite pie dough before rolling it out for an apple & Comté pie
- Top an asparagus and mushroom frittata with Comté
- Make a pizza with thinly sliced red potatoes, bacon and Comté
- Melt Comté over seasonal, cooked vegetables, such as squash, fennel or cauliflower, for an easy gratin
- Sprinkle shredded Comté over puff pastry, cut it into strips, and bake until crisp for a fast but elegant hors d'oeuvre
- Stir Comté into mashed potatoes for a delicious side dish for roasted meats
- Make a panini with grilled eggplant, zucchini, roasted peppers and Comté
- Bread boneless, skinless chicken breasts in a mixture of crushed cornflakes, Comté and walnuts before baking or sautéing
- Top sliced, toasted French bread with sautéed mushrooms and Comté then broil for a fast crostini
- Make a soufflé with Comté and crushed pistachios or pecans, and garnish with pears

On the Web

For more information about Comté, including additional recipes, downloadable POS materials, educational and training materials, videos, upcoming events, resources, and more, visit www.comte-usa.com.

The Comté Cheese Association

provides you with everything you need for a successful selling program, including: recipe booklets, brochures, aprons, demo toothpicks, training tools and more. Visit www.comte-usa.com for POS materials and free downloads.

Comté Cheese Association USA

contactusa@comte-usa.com
www.comte-usa.com
www.comte.com