

# COMTÉ

## News



COMTÉ CHEESE ASSOCIATION | [WWW.COMTE-USA.COM](http://WWW.COMTE-USA.COM)



Summer  
2016



**Comté Cheese Association**  
will be at the American Cheese Society  
Conference in Des Moines, IA  
from July 27-30

## Comté Herd & Pasture Management

Comté herds are managed in a way to create high quality milk while preserving the landscape and the biodiversity of the region. Agricultural practices are adapted to the resources and constraints of the land, with a focus on quality and on the protection of the soils, as opposed to high yields.

The Comté PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) specifications regulate how much milk can be produced on the Comté dairy farms in order to support the health of the pastures. The farms are limited to an output of 4,600 liters maximum of milk per year per hectare of fodder area, and each cow must have at least one hectare of land to roam (Comté farms have 50 cows on average). This not only ensures that the land won't be overworked, but it also maintains the quality and specificity of the cheese.

Comté farms also aim for self-sufficiency. Cows graze on fresh pasture as soon as the snow melts and there is enough grass to feed the herd. Additional green feed is limited to a single meal per day during the growing season, so that the majority of the cow's diet comes from the pasture. In the winter the cows are fed hay that was grown and dried on the farm. Farms also produce their own supplemental

fodder, such as seeds and grains (although these can be purchased locally, if needed). Fermented feed (ensilage) and GMOs are prohibited.

An experimental study carried out last year by the *Union Régionale des Fromages d'Appellation Comtois* (URFAC) showed that the agricultural practices of a group of 20 farms in the Comté Vernierfontaine cooperative (in Doubs) contributed to the biodiversity of the region. Permanent grasslands offered a good compromise between providing quality forage areas for the cows while also contributing to the region's biodiversity. There was high crop rotation, and hedges and pastures were maintained in a way to conserve open landscapes, with any interventions occurring in the fall after the breeding season of birds and flowering shrubs.

Farming is an integral part of the Comté production process. The herd and pasture management practices, which are protected by the Comté PDO specifications, support the region's terrain and terroir, which in turn support the production of a high-quality milk and cheese. For Comté and its dairy farmers, it's a win-win situation.

### 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 650-5000 ft.
- Milk must be produced by local cows of the Montbéliarde (95%) and Simmental (5%) breeds. There are approximately 130,000 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 16-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.



## Visiting the Comté Region: Les Routes du Comté

The Comté region draws visitors from around the world for its cultural and historical attractions, its rich gastronomic traditions, and its plethora of outdoor activities (such as hiking, biking and skiing). Comté has had an enormous impact on the culture, heritage and landscape of the region, which tourists can explore first-hand through the *Routes du Comté* program.

The Comté appellation extends 890 square miles across the Jura Mountains of eastern France. Within that area, there are 2,600 Comté dairy farms that produce the milk for Comté, 153 *fruitières*, or village cheesemaking facilities where the wheels are crafted, and 16 *caves d'affinage*, or aging cellars where the cheese is ripened. The *Routes du Comté* was launched in 2001 by the Comté Cheese Association (CIGC) as a way to connect visitors with these farms, cheesemakers and cellars, as well as

with other local gastronomic highlights and museums. Visitors have the unique opportunity to meet the people behind the cheese, learn about local traditions, and sample the region's specialties. The program also offers lodging and restaurant information.

The CIGC has also created a series of eight *Savoureux Circuits*, or one- to two-day travel itineraries. From discovering Comté from the farm to the cellar, to touring Poligny (the region's capital), to cross country skiing through the region's pristine countryside, the itineraries provide schedules, contact information, maps and accompanying videos.

For more travel information, visit:

[www.comte.com/visiter](http://www.comte.com/visiter)

[www.comte.com/visiter/idees-de-savoureux-circuits.html](http://www.comte.com/visiter/idees-de-savoureux-circuits.html)



## EDEN: European Destinations of Excellence

In June 2015 the Routes du Comté received an EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence) designation by the European Commission. EDEN is an initiative to encourage sustainable models of tourism throughout the EU. The labels are granted through national competitions that take place every other year.



# Comté & Cocktail Pairing

Move over wine! Cocktails can be a surprisingly fun and delicious pairing with cheese. In *The New Cocktail Hour* (Running Press © 2016), siblings André Darlington and Tenaya Darlington (who is also the writer behind the popular cheese blog, Madame Fromage) feature delicious vintage and modern cocktail recipes, including this Ritz Cocktail, which they pair with Comté.

## RITZ COCKTAIL



**Recipe by Dale Degroff. Reprinted with permission from *The New Cocktail Hour* © 2016 by André Darlington & Tenaya Darlington, Running Press**

Whenever we think of Comté, we think of buttered toast and fresh cut hay; we love how Comté embodies both warmth and freshness. We used these flavor notes to create a drink pairing with the Ritz, a cocktail that delivers notes of citrus and toasted brioche. We sipped a Ritz with a selection of Comté sold at Di Bruno Bros cheese shop in Philadelphia: a 6-month, an 8-month, and a 15+-month Comté. This bubbly beauty knew how to tango with all of them!”

– André Darlington and Tenaya Darlington

- 3/4 ounce (22 ml) brandy (Pierre Ferrand Ambre)
- 1/2 ounce (15 ml) Cointreau
- 1/4 ounce (7 ml) maraschino liqueur (Luxardo)
- 1/4 ounce (7 ml) fresh lemon juice
- 2 ounces (60 ml) chilled Champagne (or crémant)
- Orange twist, for garnish

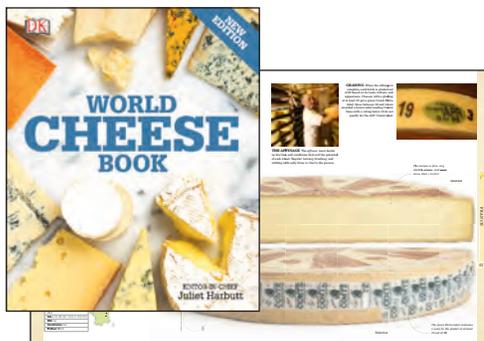
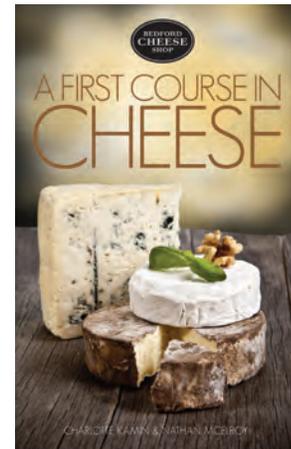
Stir the ingredients, except Champagne, with ice and strain into a martini glass. Top with Champagne and garnish with an orange twist on the rim of the glass.

## New Cheese Books

### A First Course in Cheese

Charlotte Kamin is the operating partner of the Bedford Cheese Shop and a founding board member of the Daphne Zepos Teaching Award. Her first book, *A first Course in Cheese* (Race Point Publishing, © 2015), which she co-authored with Nathan McElroy, covers everything from animal breeds, to cheesemaking practices, to choosing, pairing and enjoying cheeses. It also includes an encyclopedia of cheeses organized by cheese type. Kamin notes, “Comté is one of the most widely loved

cheeses throughout France. Due to its wide-ranging flavor profile, which varies depending on how long it is aged and the time of year it is made, Comté stands as an example of how a cheese can become the backbone of a community.” She suggests serving Comté alone with a glass of Jura wine or in fondue, and she notes, “A fun cheese plate to present to friends is a ‘flight’ of Comté at different ages, as each one really does taste unique.”

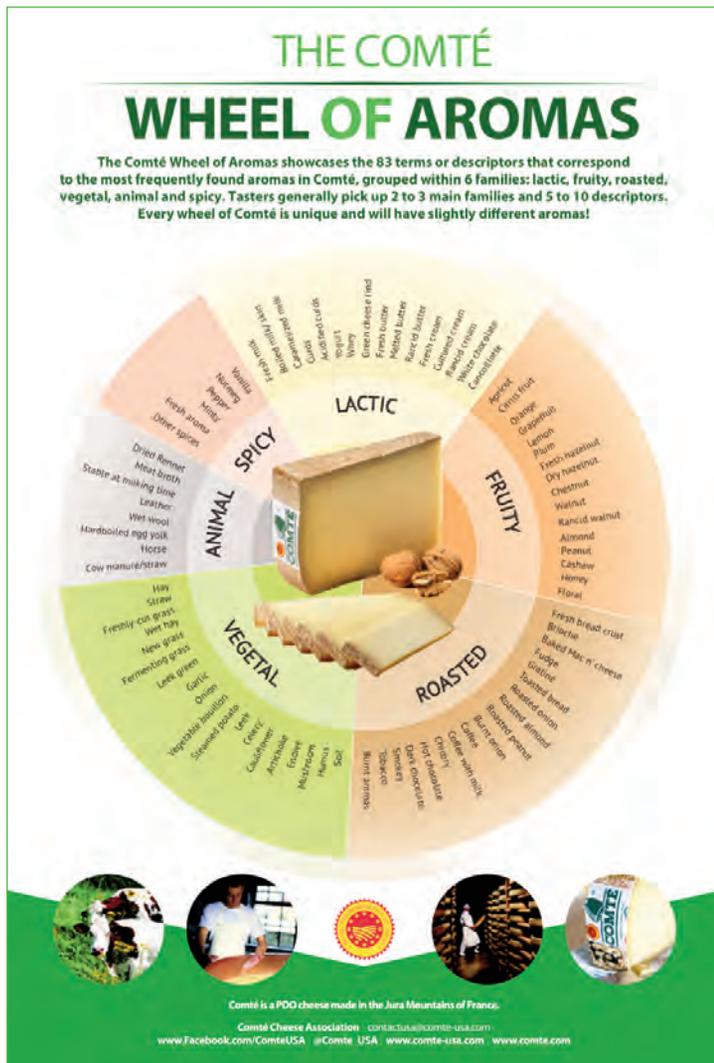


### World Cheese Book

The second edition of the *World Cheese Book* (DK, a division of Penguin Random House, © 2015), edited by Juliet Habutt, features 750 cheeses from 25 countries with accompanying photographs, tasting notes and pairing suggestions. Written by a team of experts and organized by region, it’s a fantastic at-a-glance reference for any cheese lover. The double-page entry for Comté states: “Each *fruitière* has its own distinct profile that reflects the soil, climate, and flora where the cows

graze—from melted butter, milk chocolate, hazelnuts, and fudge to aromas of toast, plum jam, leather, pepper, and dark chocolate; others can be more reminiscent of butterscotch and hazelnuts and even sweet oranges.” The book suggests serving Comté “virtually any time of day” in dishes such as quiches, soups, sauces and salads, or with fish, white meat or dry white wines.

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## Comté Wheel of Aromas Poster

Check out our new Wheel of Aromas poster! This 13x19-inch poster features the 83 terms or descriptors that correspond to the most frequently found aromas in Comté, grouped within 6 families: lactic, fruity, roasted, vegetal, animal and spicy. Each wheel of Comté has a slightly different set of aromas, depending on the terroir where it was produced, the season of production, the style of the cheesemaker, and the time it spent aging. The posters are a fantastic tool for staff training, consumer education, promotions, events and classes. To request a free copy, email us at [trade@comte-usa.com](mailto:trade@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](http://www.comte-usa.com) for POS materials and free downloads.

“Comté News” is created by **Carbonnier Communications, NYC.** [info@carbonniercommunications.com](mailto:info@carbonniercommunications.com)



## American Cheese Society Conference

Are you going to the American Cheese Society Conference in Des Moines this summer? If so, we want to see you! The Comté Cheese Association will be hosting a table at the ACS Conference on Thursday, July 28th. Stop by our table any time throughout the day to taste Comté, to learn more about its history and production, and to meet Aurelia Chimier, the French Communications director (who will be delighted to share a little bit of the Jura with you). In addition, we'll be rolling out our fifth annual Comté Scholarship for ACS CCPs!!! If you are an existing CCP or if you're taking the test this year, stop by to learn how you can win a free trip to the Comté region!



## Counter Culture

The Comté Cheese Association will be leading a seminar and guided tasting at Culture magazine's Counter Culture event on Sunday, October 16th in Boston. The free educational event is designed to introduce cheesemakers to mongers, retailers, distributors, educators, chefs and food professionals. If you're in the Boston area, don't miss it! For more information, visit: <https://counterculturenyc.eventbrite.com>

### Comté Cheese Association,

representing the Comté PDO in the US

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