

# Grate.Pair.Share.

COOKING & ENTERTAINING WITH WISCONSIN CHEESE

## Merry Munchies

*Good things  
come in small  
(cheesy) bites*



FESTIVE FONDUES | ELEGANT HOLIDAY DINNER IDEAS | EXPERT CHEESE PAIRINGS



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The holidays are upon us. It's a time when we open our hearts and homes to friends and family near and far. In my house, I welcome my loved ones with great food at the center of our festivities.

Hosting is one of my favorite things to do. I guess you could say it's my "love language." From setting a beautiful table to planning a menu my

guests will always remember, providing a special meal is my gift to others. I can't wait to see their smiles when I serve those adorable zucchini picks (page 15) and that impressive Trim-A-Tree Holiday Cheese Board (page 22).

As fun as big, festive celebrations are, quiet nights at home with the family are pretty amazing, too. As the snow gently falls outside, we like to take a break from the hustle of the season and gather for a warm, home-cooked dinner. What family wouldn't love to smell the Pomegranate-Glazed Chicken Thighs with Fontina (page 32) and Ultimate Twice-Baked Potatoes (page 29) cooking in the kitchen?

Enjoying time-honored traditions are what make the holidays so memorable. In this issue, I share my own family's most beloved tradition—our Christmas Eve fondue dinner (page 33)! I create this meal experience for my family by transforming our kitchen island into a grazing table with decadent cheese fondues and an array of accompaniments. We talk, laugh and dunk the night away! To top off the meal, we also play games before settling in to watch a Christmas movie (my husband always votes for Bill Murray's "Scrooged"). Give it a try yourself, and I promise you'll love it as much as we do.

Peace and love to you and yours,

*Suzanne Fanning*

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## Grate it. Rate it.

We love receiving reviews and helpful advice from passionate cooks and bakers who have tried our recipes. The reviews are valuable to us and much appreciated. Please keep the feedback coming! If you've tried a recipe, leave your opinions and any recipe tips at: [WisconsinCheese.com/Recipes](https://www.wisconsincheese.com/Recipes).

### Brandied Cranberry-Havarti Galette



#### Great Party Pleaser

Here's a new way to use dried cranberries. Who could pass on this delicious combo of cranberries and havarti cheese wrapped in delicious pastry? Not me!

— Clara1234

### Beef Tenderloin with Parmesan Cream Sauce



#### Wonderful Combination of Flavors

I made this for my husband. We loved the steak and rich, parmesan cheese sauce with shallots combination.

— Joni

### Gouda-Pancetta Smashed Potatoes



#### So Gouda

I made this last night—absolutely delicious! Easy to prepare and a nice change from regular mashed potatoes, I will definitely make this dish again.

— Jill42

### Peppermint Holiday Cake



#### Simple and Stunning

The hardest part was keeping the white and red candy from mixing to make the spikes, but it turned out beautiful. Peppermint is my favorite Christmas flavor.

— Katlen456



WELCOME TO



WISCONSIN

[WisconsinCheese.com](https://www.wisconsincheese.com)





# Sausage and Colby Cheese Omelet Roll

Servings 6

## Ingredients

- 12 large eggs
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 8 ounces bulk sage pork sausage
- 1 medium sweet red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 10 ounces **Arena SpringGreen™ Colby Longhorn cheese**, shredded and divided (2 1/2 cups)
- Minced fresh parsley

## Instructions

Heat oven to 375°F. Line a 15 x 10-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Coat with cooking spray.

Whisk the eggs, milk, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Pour into prepared pan.

Bake for 23-27 minutes or until omelet is set.

Meanwhile, cook sausage and red bell pepper in a large skillet over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in parsley.

Sprinkle 2 cups colby and sausage mixture over the omelet to within 1/2 inch of edges.

Roll up omelet, jelly-roll style, starting with the long side. Lift and roll omelet with parchment or thin spatulas, peeling paper away while rolling. (Omelet and pan will be hot!) Sprinkle with remaining colby. Bake for 2-3 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Garnish with parsley.



# SPOTLIGHT ON Cheeselandia WISCONSIN

Cheeselandians are spreading the word about Wisconsin's most celebrated export—cheese! Through their snapshots, see how community members are creating and sharing special moments centered around aged cheddars, funky blues, original colbys and more.



“Only gouda vibes at my Cheeselandia house party! I was excited to share my love of Wisconsin Cheese and Cheeselandia with my friends, so I created this extra sharp grazing table. We were cheesin’ real hard after trying the cheeses from Carr Valley Cheese!”

— Sara Kim



“I felt so much pride and joy when I shared these beautifully crafted cheeses from my home state with my California friends. They really highlighted why Wisconsin is the true dairy state.”

— Amy de Leon



“We had a great time with new and old friends during our Cheeselandia house party. There was lots of cheese but also laughing, food and fun! We love being part of the Cheeselandia community.”

— Thomas Talbert

***Want in on the fun?*** Be part of an enthusiastic community of Wisconsin cheese lovers and participate through in-person and virtual experiences. You’ll learn from the best and have an opportunity to share your cheese-inspired creativity with others. Join today at: [www.cheeseapplication.com/apply](http://www.cheeseapplication.com/apply).



# Sparkly Starters

The warm glow of lit candles, the soft clinking of glasses, the festive chatter of guests—'tis the season of entertaining. Hosting a holiday gathering yourself? These easy yet impressive appetizers are worth their weight in gold. Each delicious bite features specialty cheese paired with festive flavors guaranteed to make your soiree shine.





# Cheesy Bacon-Wrapped Bites

Makes About 30 Bites

## INGREDIENTS

1 pound bacon

### BREAD CHEESE BITES:

1 package (6 ounces) **Brunkow's Brun-uusto™ Baked Cheese (juustoleipa)**, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1/2 small fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into 1/2-inch cubes

Toothpicks

### BLUE CHEESE BITES:

2 1/2 cups dried apricots

1 cup **Roth Buttermilk Blue® Cheese Crumbles** (6 ounces)

Toothpicks

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons honey

## INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oven to 400°F. Place greased wire racks on two aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheets.

Cut bacon strips in half widthwise. Arrange bacon strips in a single layer on racks, taking care to not overlap. Bake for 15 minutes. (Bacon will be partially cooked.) Remove bacon to paper towels to drain and cool.

### BREAD CHEESE BITES:

Wrap one bacon strip around one juustaleipa and pineapple cube. Repeat step with half of the bacon. Secure bacon with toothpicks. Place on a wire rack.

### BLUE CHEESE BITES:

Cut a lengthwise slit into each dried apricot. Stuff each with about 1 teaspoon blue cheese. Wrap remaining bacon around apricots; secure with toothpicks. Place on a wire rack.

Combine the brown sugar, soy sauce and honey in a bowl. Spoon or brush glaze over bacon-wrapped bites. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until bacon is crisp.



# Festive Zucchini Picks

## GET THE LOOK!

To make, cut **Henning's Medium Cheddar cheese** into 1/2-inch slices, about 1 1/2-inches wide. Cut slices with a 1-inch star cookie cutter, using the handle of a small spoon to press and release cheese from cutter at star points. Cut **Henning's Pepper Jack cheese** into cubes, about 1-inch each.

Cut ends from two medium zucchini. Thinly slice zucchini into ribbons with a mandoline slicer or vegetable peeler, each about 1/16-inch thick. Trim ribbons to measure 6-inches lengthwise.

Thread cheddar, zucchini and pepper jack on picks or toothpicks.







# Spiced Pear Tartlets

Makes 2 1/2 Dozen Tartlets

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter, cubed
- 2 medium pears, cored and diced
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 4 ounces **Cedar Grove Havarti cheese**, diced (1 cup)
- 2 packages (1.9 ounces each) frozen miniature phyllo tart shells
- Fresh thyme leaves

## INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oven to 350°F.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the pears, cinnamon, cloves and ginger; cook and stir for 2-3 minutes or until pears are just softened.

Stir in brown sugar. Cook and stir for 2-3 minutes longer or until mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from the heat. Cool. Stir in havarti.

Place tart shells on an ungreased 15 x 10-inch baking pan; fill with havarti mixture. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until cheese is melted and bubbly. Garnish with thyme. Serve warm.



# Sweet and Salty Cashew Brittle

Makes 1 1/2 Pounds

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup salted roasted cashews
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 teaspoons butter, cubed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 ounces **Weyauwega Star Dairy** Parmesan cheese, shaved (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries

## INSTRUCTIONS

Coat a 17 x 12-inch baking pan with cooking spray.

Combine sugar and corn syrup in a 2-quart, microwave-safe bowl. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 5 minutes.

Stir in cashews and salt. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 3 minutes. (Mixture will be hot!) Stir in butter. Microwave on high for 2 minutes longer.

Stir in baking soda and vanilla. (Mixture will foam.) Pour immediately onto prepared pan. Sprinkle with parmesan and dried cranberries. Cool completely. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

RECIPE TIP: This recipe was tested with a 1,250-watt microwave.





# Trim-a-Tree Holiday Cheese Board

**SERVINGS 8-10**

## INGREDIENTS

Pine River Garlic & Herb Cold Pack cheese, softened  
Renard's 1 Year Cheddar cheese  
or Renard's Medium Cheddar cheese  
Wakker Creamy Mild Gouda cheese (aged 6-9 months)  
Sartori Merlot BellaVitano® cheese  
Pitted green and Kalamata olives  
Whole Sweetie Drop miniature peppers, drained  
or chopped sweet red bell pepper  
Roasted almonds  
Roasted cashews  
Seedless green and red grapes  
Thinly sliced salami  
Dark and white chocolate peppermint barks  
or chocolate barks of choice  
Flatbread crackers  
Sugared cranberries  
Pomegranate  
Cranberry crisps  
Honeycrisp apple slices  
Thinly sliced prosciutto  
Ginger thins (cookies)  
Fresh rosemary sprigs  
Pomegranate seeds

## INSTRUCTIONS

Spread garlic & herb cheese into a tree shape on a waxed paper-lined serving tray. Cut cheddar into slices, about a 1/4-inch thick. Place slices around edges of tree. Cut remaining cheddar into thin slices.

Cut a 1/2-inch slice of gouda, about 1 1/2-inches wide. Cut slice with a 1-inch star cookie cutter, using the handle of a small spoon to press and release cheese from cutter at star points. Set aside. Cut remaining gouda into thin slices.

Cut Merlot BellaVitano® into batons.

Arrange the Merlot BellaVitano® and remaining cheddar and gouda on serving tray. Place olives and miniature peppers in serving bowls; add to tray. Fill in tray with almonds, cashews, grapes, salami, chocolate barks, crackers, cranberries, pomegranate, cranberry crisps, apple, prosciutto, ginger thins and rosemary. Decorate tree with the pomegranate seeds, rosemary and reserved gouda star.





# HOMEMADE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays. When family gathers this special time of year, set a pretty place at your table for them with a cozy spread that makes spirits bright. Tender chicken thighs stuffed with fontina cheese, twice-baked potatoes loaded with aged cheddar and green beans wrapped in bacon are on this very merry menu. Because for the holidays, you can't beat home, sweet home.





# PLACE SETTING O CHRISTMAS TREE

How lovely are thy cheesy branches! To make, simply cut from your favorite block or ask your deli department for 1/4-inch slices of Wisconsin cheese. (We used **Springside Garden Vegetable Monterey Jack** cheese.)

Cut out the desired number of place settings with a tree-shaped cookie cutter.

Place cheese trees on small serving plates. Decorate with thin zucchini ribbons and diced sweet red bell pepper.







# ASIAGO GREEN BEAN BUNDLES

Servings 8

**Ingredients**

- 8 bacon strips
- 1 1/2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed
- 1/3 cup butter, cubed and melted
- 2 ounces **Saxon Asiago Fresca cheese**, finely shredded and divided (2/3 cup)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- Toothpicks
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

**Instructions**

Heat oven to 400°F. Place a greased wire rack on an aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet.

Arrange bacon strips in a single layer on rack, taking care to not overlap. Bake for 10 minutes. (Bacon will be partially cooked.) Remove bacon to paper towels to drain and cool.

Meanwhile, bring water to a boil in a Dutch oven. Carefully add green beans in batches; cook for 2-3 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and immediately place green beans in a bowl of ice water. Drain and pat dry.

Whisk the butter, 1/3 cup asiago, garlic powder and pepper in a large bowl. Add green beans; toss to coat. Wrap bacon around 8-10 green beans. Secure each with a toothpick. Place bundles on a greased 15 x 10-inch baking pan. Whisk maple syrup and brown sugar in a small bowl; brush over bacon.

Bake for 12-15 minutes or until bacon is almost crisp. Sprinkle with remaining asiago. Bake for 4-6 minutes longer or until bacon is crisp.



# ULTIMATE TWICE-BAKED POTATOES

Servings 8

## Ingredients

4 large russet potatoes  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
4 tablespoons butter, cubed and softened  
1/2 cup **Scott's of Wisconsin Garlic & Herb Cold Pack cheese**  
1/2 cup sour cream  
1/2 cup milk  
4 ounces **Widmer's One Year Cheddar cheese**, shredded and divided (1 cup)  
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley  
Minced fresh parsley

## Instructions

Heat oven to 400°F.

Pierce potatoes with a fork. Place on an ungreased 15 x 10-inch baking pan. Rub with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for 55-60 minutes or until tender. Cool potatoes on a wire rack.

When cool enough to handle, cut each potato in half lengthwise. Carefully scoop out center pulp into a large bowl, leaving each half with a 1/4-inch shell.

Mash pulp and butter. Add the garlic & herb cheese, sour cream and milk; mash until desired consistency. Stir in 1/2 cup cheddar and parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

Spoon filling into potato shells; return to the pan. Sprinkle with remaining cheddar. Bake for 15-20 minutes longer or until potatoes are warmed through. Garnish with parsley.







# POMEGRANATE-GLAZED CHICKEN THIGHS WITH FONTINA

Servings 8

## Ingredients

### Pomegranate Glaze:

- 2 cups pomegranate juice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 4 fresh rosemary sprigs

### Chicken Thighs:

- 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 8 bone-in chicken thighs, with skin
- Salt and pepper
- 10 ounces **Carr Valley Fontina cheese**, shredded and divided (2 1/2 cups)
- 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
- Fresh rosemary sprigs

## Instructions

### Pomegranate Glaze:

Bring the pomegranate juice, sugar, lemon juice and rosemary to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat; cook and stir until sugar is dissolved. Reduce heat to low. Simmer, uncovered, for 35-40 minutes or until glaze is reduced to about 1 cup, stirring occasionally. Remove rosemary sprigs and discard. Set aside 2/3 cup glaze for serving.

### Chicken Thighs:

Heat oven to 400°F.

Combine rosemary and garlic powder. Pat chicken thighs dry with paper towels. Transfer chicken to a greased 17 x 12-inch pan. Gently loosen skin from chicken thighs, leaving one side attached. Add the rosemary mixture, salt, pepper and 1/4 cup fontina under skin of each.

Brush chicken skin with remaining 1/3 cup pomegranate glaze; season with salt and pepper. Bake for 20 minutes. Brush with pomegranate glaze. Bake for 20-25 minutes longer or until a thermometer inserted in meat reads 165°F.

Sprinkle chicken with remaining fontina. Broil 4 inches from the heat for 2-3 minutes or until cheese is melted. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Meanwhile, bring reserved glaze just to a boil. Stir in pomegranate seeds. Serve chicken thighs with glaze. Garnish with rosemary.





# FA LA LA FONDUES

Celebrate the season with a new chorus of decadent fondues and dippers. Suzanne Fanning, the editor-in-chief of *Grate. Pair. Share.*, gives us a peek into her family's most delicious and cherished Christmas Eve tradition.







# PLAN A SEASONAL SPREAD

Planning a holiday fondue night takes a little forethought but that's half the fun! Follow these tips to create a memorable meal your family will be asking for year after year.

**FINALIZE YOUR FONDUES.** From cheesy to chocolatey, endless fondue options abound. "My family has our favorite fondues, such as the recipes we're sharing on pages 43-48. We also add new fondues every year like raspberry fondue served with cakes, brownies and fruits," says Su.

**DECIDE ON DIPPERS.** Add variety and color and buy only high-quality accompaniments. For cheese fondues, consider an array of fresh and blanched vegetables, cooked meats and breads. "I add new, outrageous dippers every year, from truffle parmesan fries to cooked brats, steak bites and more," shares Su. Consider how your dipping options will look together. You're aiming for an arrangement that's beautiful and bountiful.

**VARY YOUR VESSELS.** Get a classic look and let the food steal the show by using all-white serveware. Or mix and match items like mason jars, cutting boards, platters, small serving plates and bowls for a more eclectic look.

**DON'T FORGET THE DRINKS.** Create a signature cocktail to savor or serve beer, prosecco or chilled white wine with cheese fondues. Red wine, bourbon or dark beer pair well with dessert fondues.





# KNOW YOUR CHEESE

Cheese matters when it comes to fondue. Use handcrafted cheeses and shred your own. Often store-bought shredded cheeses have anticaking ingredients that interfere with melting and a smooth consistency. That said, make sure the cheeses you choose are ones that melt well. Cheeses like **Decatur Dairy Stettler Swiss cheese** or **Kingston Creamery Amish Heritage™ Gorgonzola Cheese** blended with **Crystal Farms Original Cream Cheese** are great choices.

Shred or grate cheeses cold for easier handling. A food processor works well, especially if you're grating large amounts. Before preparing the fondue, bring the shredded cheeses to room temperature for quicker melting. This will help prevent clumping and a greasy texture.

Gradually whisk in cheeses when melting at the end of the cooking process.

# PUT PREP IN YOUR STEP

For a stress-free fondue night, allow yourself plenty of time to prepare before you present. A few hours the night before or early in the day ought to do it.

"I blanch all the veggies and cut everything into bite-sized pieces beforehand, so I can put it all together like I'm laying out a giant cheese board just before the event," shares Su.

Store prepped ingredients in food storage containers or on plates, covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator just before you're ready to reveal your holiday feast.

Fondues are best when made just before serving.







## MAKE TIME FOR FESTIVE FUN

Because it's not a sit-down meal, fondue also allows more time for fun. "Fondue night is our big family game night," says Su. "I also gift everyone matching pajamas or T-shirts. I try to make them as ridiculous as possible because tradition is tradition! Eyes roll but so do the good times. We end the night by opening a gift and watching a family Christmas movie."



# GORGONZOLA CHEESE FONDUE

Servings 8-10

## INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons butter, cubed

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 1/4 cups whole milk

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1 cup **Kingston Creamery Amish Heritage™ Gorgonzola Cheese Crumbles** (6 ounces)

2 ounces (1/4 cup) **Crystal Farms Original Cream Cheese**, cut into small cubes

Pepper to taste

Fig or raspberry preserves

Honeycomb

Assorted Dippers: baguette and pear slices, green onions, roasted brussels sprouts and thinly sliced, cooked and rolled steak lollipops

## INSTRUCTIONS

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in flour until smooth. Gradually whisk in milk and garlic powder. Bring to a boil; cook and whisk for 2-3 minutes or until thickened.

Reduce heat to low. Gradually whisk in gorgonzola and cream cheese until melted. (Do not boil.) Remove from the heat. Season with pepper to taste.

Transfer to a fondue pot. Heat on low to keep warm. Serve with fig preserves, honeycomb and dippers.





# CHAMPAGNE-SWISS CHEESE FONDUE

Servings 8-10

## INGREDIENTS

16 ounces **Decatur Dairy Stettler Swiss cheese**, shredded (4 cups)

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 tablespoon butter, cubed

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 1/2 cups brut (dry) champagne or sparkling wine

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Assorted Dippers: blanched asparagus, breadsticks, charcuterie, pickled vegetables, roasted mushrooms and potatoes

## INSTRUCTIONS

Place shredded swiss in a large bowl. Cover and let stand for 2 hours at room temperature. Toss swiss with cornstarch.

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic; cook and stir for 1 minute. Add champagne. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly.

Reduce heat to low. Gradually whisk in swiss mixture until melted. (Do not boil.) Whisk in lemon juice and nutmeg.

Transfer to a fondue pot. Heat on low to keep warm. Serve with dippers.





# SALTED CARAMEL- MASCARPONE CHEESE FONDUE

Servings 8-10

## INGREDIENTS

1 package (9.5 ounces) caramel candies, unwrapped

1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

1 container (8 ounces) **Cello® Rich and Creamy Mascarpone cheese**

Sea salt to taste

Chocolate sauce or hot fudge topping, warmed

Assorted Dippers: apple slices, cookies, marshmallows, pineapple, pound cake, seedless grapes and strawberries

## INSTRUCTIONS

Melt candies with cream in a double boiler or metal bowl over simmering water, stirring frequently until smooth. Add mascarpone; whisk until smooth. Remove from the heat. Season with salt to taste.

Transfer to a fondue pot. Heat on low to keep warm. Serve with chocolate sauce and dippers.





# PARTY- PERFECT PAIRINGS AND TIPS

Liz Nerud



Entertain loved ones with ease. Take the hectic out of the holidays with expert advice from an experienced cheesemonger. What's a cheesemonger, you ask? Liz Nerud is happy to explain and share her easy tips for cheese boards and three seasonal cheese pairings that you can make in minutes.



Liz Nerud is a Certified Cheese Professional and has been a cheesemonger for over 20 years. She's competed in and judged The Cheesemonger Invitational, where the best cheesemongers from around the U.S. compete. You can find her managing the extensive cheese department at Kowalski's Market in Woodbury, Minnesota.





### What do cheesemongers do?

We're ambassadors who connect cheese to people. As representatives for the cheesemakers, there's a certain amount of responsibility when we approach the counter. We must be educated about all of it—the cheeses, the land and the animals. We also decide what goes in the display case (my cheese counter has over 150 cheeses) and take care of those cheeses until we sell them, so there's a lot of technical knowledge involved, too.

### Your best advice for easy entertaining?

Cheese boards are the most fun—ever! Simply figure out how many people are coming before creating an inviting platter. Three nice-sized blocks of cheese should serve six to eight people. Do not use fewer, however, because it's important to have a scrumptious and abundant presentation. Experiment with shapes when cutting cheese, from triangles arranged in pretty sunbursts to batons and matchsticks.



## SARTORI MONTAMORÉ® CHEESE + CANDIED PECANS + DRIED CHERRIES

*"Showcase this cheddar's natural, crumbly texture by carving small nuggets with a paring knife."*

### Tell us about your pairing suggestions?

In the pairing above, the sweet, nutty notes of **Sartori MontAmoré® Cheddar cheese** are echoed in the caramelized flavor of candied pecans. Chewy, dried cherries add texture. The next pairing features **Marieke® Gouda Foenegreek cheese**, a smooth and buttery raw milk gouda with an unusual touch of fennel—its seeds are described as having maple syrup and burnt sugar flavors. Dried pineapple is the

perfect foil to complete this exotic flavor combo. In the last pairing, the charming complexity of flavors in **Hook's Blue Cheese** welcomes a kiss of spicy honey. Add the crunch of rich puff pastry and you have an ideal bite.

**Looking for more pairing ideas?**  
Visit The Cheese Life blog at [wisconsincheese.com](http://wisconsincheese.com).



## MARIEKE® GOUDA FOENEGREEK CHEESE + DRIED PINEAPPLE

*“Cut a gouda wedge (or any cheese wedges) into triangles by slicing it from the bottom.”*



### Your favorite ways to dress up pairings or a cheese board?

Since most cheeses are white, I rely on accompaniments to provide visual appeal—dried and fresh fruits, marmalades, nuts, spiced crackers and herbs like rosemary and thyme. During the holiday season is when I get into all the lovely chutneys. Served warm or cold, they lend such friendly flavor with their warm spices.

### What is your go-to cheese?

Being from Wisconsin, I'm a cheddar girl. You *always* need to serve an excellent cheddar because everyone's going to love it. My heart is always and forever with **Widmer's cheddar cheeses**, but I'm also huge fan of cheeses made at **Red Barn Family Farms**. When selecting cheddars, keep in mind there are two varieties—traditional and sweet. Traditional cheddars are savory and sharp, while sweet cheddars are nutty.

## HOOK'S BLUE CHEESE + PUFF PASTRY + HOT HONEY

*“Small, mounded chunks or cubes work best for blue cheese, which can be a bit fussy when handling.”*



### Tips for pairing cheese and wine?

I give my customers a sample of the cheese they're buying and say, "Take this to your wine merchant for tasting." Most merchants have a sensory memory of their wine stock and can help pair the two. Not only are they building a relationship with a local cheesemonger, but they get to interact and know their local wine expert, too.

### What makes Wisconsin cheeses so special?

Heritage and legacy—these philosophies are played out every day. Many of today's cheesemakers come from generations of cheesemakers. It's a tradition of excellence that goes back 180 years in Wisconsin. While some people may associate the state with mass-produced cheeses, artisan cheeses have become especially important over the last several decades. Wisconsin has created a legacy with Old World inspiration and American innovation.





# Mascarpone Kolache Cookies

Makes 2 Dozen Cookies

## Ingredients

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened

1 container (8 ounces) **Crave Brothers Farmstead Classics Mascarpone cheese**

1/4 cup apricot preserves

1/4 cup strawberry preserves

Confectioners' sugar

## Instructions

Combine flour and salt in a bowl. Beat butter and mascarpone in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually add flour mixture; beat until combined.

Shape dough into a disk; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Heat oven to 350°F.

Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to a 15 x 10-inch rectangle, about an 1/8-inch thick. Cut into twenty-four 2 1/2-inch squares. Place 1 inch apart on parchment-lined baking sheets.

Place a heaping 1/2 teaspoon apricot preserves in the center of half of the squares. Repeat step with strawberry preserves. Fold opposite corners of dough over preserves; pinch tightly at center to seal.

Bake for 15-18 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand for 5 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely. Dust with confectioners' sugar.





# Holiday Eggnog Cheesecake

Servings 8-10

## Ingredients

### GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST:

- 2 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, cubed and melted

### CHEESECAKE FILLING:

- 2 packages (8 ounces each) **Crystal Farms Original Cream Cheese**, softened
- 1 container (8 ounces) **BelGioioso Ricotta con Latte**® cheese
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup eggnog
- 4 large eggs

### SUGARED FRUITS:

- 3 cups sugar, divided
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup whole fresh cranberries
- 1 cup whole fresh strawberries
- 8 fresh rosemary sprigs, cut into 2-inch pieces

### FROSTING:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1 bag (2 pounds) confectioners' sugar, divided
- 3/4 cup eggnog

## Instructions

### GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST:

Heat oven to 350°F. Line the bottom of a greased 9-inch springform pan with parchment paper; grease paper.

Combine graham cracker crumbs and sugar in a bowl; stir in butter. Press onto bottom of prepared pan. Place on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Place pan on double thickness of heavy-duty aluminum foil, about an 18-inch square. Tightly wrap foil around pan.

### CHEESECAKE FILLING:

Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

Beat the cream cheese, ricotta, sugar, flour and nutmeg in a large bowl until smooth. Gradually beat in eggnog. Add eggs, one at a time, beating each just until combined. Spread filling over crust.

Place springform pan into a baking pan with rimmed edges, about 2-inches deep. Add hot water halfway up sides of pan. Bake for 75-85 minutes or until cheesecake is set around edges and jiggles slightly in center. Turn off the heat. Crack oven door, about 1 inch. Let cheesecake stand in oven for 1 hour.

Carefully run a knife around edges of pan. Cool completely on a wire rack, about 1 hour. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight.

### SUGARED FRUITS:

Place wire rack on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet.

Cook and stir 1 cup sugar and water in a large saucepan over medium-high until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat. Cool syrup to room temperature.

Add the cranberries, strawberries and rosemary to syrup in batches, stirring to coat. Transfer fruits and rosemary to prepared pan. Let stand for about 45-50 minutes or until dry.

Place remaining sugar into a shallow, large bowl. Roll fruits and rosemary in sugar, in batches, to coat. Let stand until completely dry. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

### FROSTING:

Cream butter and 2 cups confectioners' sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually add remaining confectioners' sugar alternately with eggnog, beating each addition until combined.

Remove sides of pan. Spread and pipe top with frosting.

Pipe remaining frosting around bottom edges of cake. Decorate with fruits and rosemary.







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