



A Small Cheese in Provence: Cooking with Goat Cheese

Jean Gill

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ISBN 978-2955010112 Alternative cover version

'If I were to currently recommend a cheese book to you, I would choose this one... the photography is beautiful and there is passion in the recipes. It makes a fantastic gift.' Samantha Milner recipes.com
'Laugh out loud... such a picture of the fields of lavender, sunflowers and olive trees that you could almost be there with her.' Stephanie Sheldrake, Living France Magazine

From the author of the bestselling memoir 'How Blue is My Valley' comes another irresistible invitation to join her in Provence, this time to discover everything you want to know about cheese and its place in French life. How to choose it, serve it and cook with it. Recipes range from traditional tapenade to original British/Provençal fusion such as Big Franglais Breakfast and Pizza Gallois, all illustrated with step-by-step instructions.

Beautiful colour photos throughout take the reader into Provençal landscapes, street markets and conversations, food history and verse. The celebration of cheese in French and English includes the godlike goatherds and a charming poem in homage to the ravioli of the Dauphiné region, translated from the local Occitan.

You could say it's good, ravioli well made
topped with some gruyère extra thick-laid.

A flavour of France, even for those who don't cook; food for the brain as well as the table. Why was goat cheese sent on an Apollo space mission? What should you wear if elected to the Guild of Olive Brothers? What is the connection between France's biggest cross-country car rally and the Picodon cheese? Entertain yourself and your dinner companions with fun facts aswell as recipes that are tried and tested.

Award-winning writer and photographer Jean Gill has lived in Provence since 2003. Her articles and photos of French food and lifestyle have appeared in France Magazine and Living France Magazine.

jeangill.com

A Small Cheese in Provence: Cooking with Goat Cheese Details

Date : Published February 2016 by The 13th Sign (first published March 26th 2009)

ISBN :

Author : Jean Gill

Format : Paperback 108 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Cookbooks, Food



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Jena Henry says

When I was growing up, I loved my mother's grilled cheese sandwiches. She made them with standard 1960's white bread and American cheese. Sometimes we went a bit more exotic and used swiss cheese. That, plus Velveeta for macaroni and cheese, was the extent of my cheese repertoire until I grew up. I have since added many cheeses to my life- Brie, Bleu, Camembert, Port Salut. And now, thanks to author Jean Gill, I now have a new cheese to try- a small cheese from Provence, France known as the Picadon.

Jean Gill gives us a chatty and friendly look at Provence and its goat cheese, famous since the Middle Ages. She tells us the history of the cheese, the wine to drink with it (rose, but really any white or red works) and how to cut it for serving. We learn about proper storage conditions for the cheese and are given recipes and many "conseil d'ami"- cooks tips. She also introduces us to The Seven Classic Families of Cheese.

The little lessons about this goat cheese are interspersed with lovely photos of the area- I dream of sitting at one of the shops, enjoying my wine and cheese with Jean. There are also many other interesting quotes and facts.

From a recipe- "The combination of fresh fruit with chili pepper is like kissing someone who is really reserved and being stunned by the passion."

Here is an amusing fact- "Asparagus was banned from French convent schools in the past, as a vegetable unsuitable for young ladies."

This is a short, but enjoyable view of the famous goat cheese of Provence. You may want to read Jean Gil's memoir of Provence, How Blue is My Valley, either before or after this cookery book to learn more about this lovely area of France and its food and culture. Bon Appetit!

Tammy says

While there were not as many recipes included as I would have liked, I still enjoyed this cookbook. The pictures were interesting and fun. The quotes and poems were entertaining. I found the inclusion of a list of substitutes for the various goat cheeses to be helpful, since in my area we are very limited in quality goat cheese. I have marked several of the recipes already to try after my next grocery run.

Emily-Jane Orford says

When most of us think of cheese, we think of cheddar, mozzarella and other common cow's milk cheeses.

Even when we think of gourmet cheeses like different varieties of brie, we think of cow's milk cheeses. There are some of us savvy enough to realize that there are cheeses made from the milk of different animals, like goat. In fact, goat cheeses, in particular, are gaining in popularity in North America. Meanwhile, there is a region in France, Provence, that is well known specifically for its delicious varieties of goat cheeses. A particular specialty is the Picodon, a small round cheese the size and shape of a hockey puck.

There are stories behind these cheeses and recipes that one must try to fully appreciate the different characteristics of goat cheeses from Provence. Jean Gill's book, "A Small Cheese in Provence: Cooking With Goat Cheese", is more than just another cookbook. With beautiful photographs, quotes from interesting people, both known and unknown, and little parables about these delectable cheeses, this book makes an interesting coffee table book and a travelogue as well as a chef's delight in culinary possibilities. The author leads the reader through Provence, the story of the goats and their cheeses, and provides the reader with many, very French, recipes to tempt the cuisine connoisseur. And, of course, a good cheese is just a cheese without the right wine to accompany it; the author provides wine suggestions as well.

This is a book to enjoy over and over again, along with a good glass of wine and a Picodon.

Reviewed for Readers' Favorite.
