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MAGAZINE

LENA KWAK
THE SECRET
INGREDIENT
BEHIND
**THOMAS
KELLER'S**
GF FLOUR

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Cheese Shop Sensation

These cheeses and their accompaniments are unquestionably a cut above. That's because cheese shops spend a lot of time curating their selections to make sure they're special. Ask for the style of cheese below or get specific with names; either way, a cheesemonger will point you in the right direction.

“Surface-ripened” goat or mixed-milk cheese

Characterized by a wrinkly rind, coral- or brain-patterned exterior, an often creamy texture, and a slightly yellow color, these goat or mixed-milk cheeses almost always get softer and creamier as they age. **Look for** Vermont Creamery Cremont—a blend of cow's and goat's milk and a dash of cream.

Alpine-style cheese

Made in the mountains in summer, then aged, and brought down in the fall to be aged some more, this semi-hard, nutty, slightly fruity style of cheese is one of the most delicious ways of preserving summer milk. **Look for** Gruyère from Switzerland.

Sheep's-milk blue cheese

Creamy and assertive, with a textured mouthfeel, this pungent cheese has long-lasting flavors. **Look for** Gabriel Coulet Roquefort or another Roquefort.

Crackers

Sometimes plain is good. But so too are crackers with moderate flavor. **Look for** Free for All Kitchen Olive Oil & Sea Salt crackers, which have a crisp yet sturdy texture, as well as a perfect ratio of salt-to-cracker; and Lesley Stowe Fine Foods' Rosemary Raisin Raincoast Oat Crisps, which are toasty and particularly good with soft cheeses.

Pepper jam

Many pepper jams are too sweet or too spicy. Find one in the middle. **Look for** Jimmie's Chipotle Pepper Jam (page 10); it's perfectly balanced and completely addictive.

Candied pecans

While spiced nuts are great with many cheeses and provide textural contrast, here lightly sweetened ones are the better choice, especially if you're including a spicy pepper jam. **Look for** Santé Candied Pecans (santenuits.com), which are slightly sweet with a pronounced pecan flavor.

Dairy Dream Team

It's not likely you'll find all three of these at one shop, but a little legwork or Internet shopping will lead you to Laura Werlin's ultimate trio for this cheese plate.

BAETJE FARMS "MIETTE"

This Missouri-made surface-ripened goat and sheep blend is a study in velvet and cream.

KÄSEREI TUFERTSCHWIL "CHÄLLERHOCKER"

It translates to “sitting in the cellar,” which means this Swiss cow's-milk cheese ripens for a while to develop its nutty, buttery flavors and silken texture.

ROELLI CHEESE HAUS "DUNBARTON BLUE"

Blue-meets-cheddar in this unique cave-aged Wisconsin marvel. You have to taste it to believe it.



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