

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO  
**CHEESE**

Edited by  
**CATHERINE DONNELLY**

Foreword by  
**MATEO KEHLER**



of the village of Munster in the center and round the sides smaller shields of the fifteen other towns of the district.

To make Munster, morning milk or the first milking is mixed with the skimmed milk of the previous day and warmed in a copper cauldron (*kessel*) to 90°F (32°C), when rennet is added. The curds are then cut one hour later. It is important that a copper pan is used, as it imparts flavor to the cheese. The curds are placed into molds, salted, and turned frequently before going to the high humidity cold cellars for aging. The cheeses are hand rubbed every two days in a saltwater solution in the typical monastic style to encourage *Brevibacterium linens* and other microbes. This, together with the humidity, turns the outside sticky and orange-red and allows the cheese to remain soft and supple. Affinage is at least four to six weeks for the larger versions, and more commonly two to three months. The resulting cheese is 5–8 inches (13–19 centimeters) in diameter and 1–3 inches (2.4–8 centimeters) high and weighs between 1–3 pounds (450 grams–1.5 kilograms). A 1-pound (450-gram) cheese uses about 5 quarts (5 liters) of milk, with a fat content of 45–48 percent. There are also smaller versions. The fermier cheeses made with unpasteurized milk within a very restricted area account for about 5 percent of the overall production.

Munster has a strong, gamey smell and a heightened bite, yet a subtle, mellow, creamy finish. This is a perfect cheese to enjoy with rye bread or biscuits with cumin seeds, white wines like Riesling or Gewurztraminer, or a blond beer.

See also FRANCE and WASHED-RIND CHEESES.

Office de Tourisme de la Vallée de Munster. "The Vosgian Cow." <http://www.vallee-munster.eu/en/terroir/vache-vosgienne.htm>.

Rance, Patrick. *The French Cheese Book*. London: Macmillan, 1989.

Patricia Michelson

**Murazzano** is a fresh PDO (protected designation of origin) cheese in the Robiola family, produced in about fifty towns in the Piedmont region in northern Italy. Traditionally it is made from full-fat, raw ewe's milk, to which up to 40 percent cow's milk is added. About 21 tons are produced every year. The origin and center of production of this

cheese is Murazzano, a small town located in the Alta Langa, an Alpine area of Piedmont, where, on market day, the women sold their Murazzano cheese (typically called "tuma") to the shopkeepers of the towns on the plains, including Turin. A fresh cheese produced with ewe's milk in the area where the Celts, an old Italic population, once lived, it is mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia*, but there is no evidence that this is the same cheese. See PLINY the elder.

The ewe's milk used for Murazzano mostly comes from the native Pecora delle Langhe, an endangered breed of sheep. After coagulation, the curd is cut to the size of a hazelnut and drained for 24 hours in molds called *fascelle*, which in the past were made of wood or aluminum. See FASCÈRA. The cheese is dry-salted, then left to ripen for 4–10 days. Murazzano is cylindrical and flat, about 4–6 inches (10–15 centimeters) wide and 1.2–1.6 inches (3–4 centimeters) high, with a weight of 0.7–0.9 pounds (300–400 grams). When fresh, Murazzano has no rind, but later forms a yellowish film. The paste is soft and white or ivory-white with a few small holes. The odor is pleasant, with milk and cream characteristics, while the taste is sweet for fresh products (after 7–10 days) and more savory and intense in cheeses aged for up to 2 months.

See also ITALY and ROBIOLA DI ROCCAVERANO.

Assopiemonte DOP & IGP. <http://www.assopiemonte.com>.

Ministero dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste. *DOC Cheeses of Italy: A Great Heritage*. Milan: Angeli, 1992.

Ottogalli, Giorgio. *Atlante dei formaggi*. Milan: Hoepli, 2001.

AAVV. *Formaggi d'Italia*. Bra: Slow Food, 2005.

Giuseppa Zeppa

**Murcia** and Murcia al Vino cheeses are made in the Murcia region of southeastern Spain, using goat's milk from the Murciano-Granadina breed. In 2001, the European Union awarded both varieties PDO (protected designation of origin) status. These PDOs protect 186 livestock farms, which have 66,000 milking goats that produce 4.9 million gallons (18.6 million liters) of milk per year. One-seventh of that milk—about 700,000 gallons (2.6 million liters)—is transformed into nearly 90,000 pounds (41,000 kilograms) of Murcia cheese and 666,000 pounds (302,000 kilograms) of Murcia al Vino cheese.