

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO  
**CHEESE**

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public, and rallied against the multitude of bland, mass-produced imitations that had gradually saturated the UK market throughout the middle and latter part of the twentieth century.

To this end, Rance traveled the length and breadth of the British Isles seeking out traditional cheeses, in particular those utilizing raw milk, in a bid to counter what he described as “the follies of witless pasteurization.” Not only did he strive to bring the best of British cheese to his small shop counter, but he inspired existing farmhouse cheesemakers to continue their trade (even going so far as to purchase cheese in advance with blank checks), as well as offering encouragement and advice to new or aspiring cheesemakers.

In 1982 Rance published *The Great British Cheese Book*, a detailed survey of the United Kingdom’s surviving farmhouse cheeses and a homage to those that had been lost, followed in 1989 by *The French Cheese Book*. Both books, intensively researched and drafted in Rance’s passionate and unassuming style, were met with critical acclaim and remain required reading for cheese enthusiasts decades after publication.

His dedication fueled a new generation of British cheese professionals and helped lay the foundations for a resurgence in the British farmhouse cheese industry. As Rance stated in *The Great British Cheese Book*, “Good cheese has been almost killed by lack of understanding and care. . . . It can only be raised back to health by a professional, indeed a vocational, attitude in those who wish to put things right and make a living by doing so” (p. 155).

See also FARMSTEAD; RAW-MILK CHEESES; and UNITED KINGDOM.

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Chris George

**Raschera** is an Italian semihard, pressed, medium fat or fat PDO (protected designation of origin) cheese produced from cow’s milk with the possible addition of small quantities of ewe’s and/or goat’s

milk. Raschera today may be produced anywhere in the province of Cuneo, but it is a typical and historical product of the Monregalese valley and is named for the Alpe Raschera, a pasture at the foot of Monte Mongioie in the village of Magliano Alpi. About 720 tons of Raschera PDO are produced every year.

Raschera PDO cheese can be named “d’Alpeggio” when it is produced in the summer in mountain pastures over 900 meters above the sea level. After coagulation, the curd is cut to produce granules the size of hazelnuts. The curd is then collected, drained in muslin for ten to fifteen minutes, and finally put into cylindrical (called “fascele”) or quadrangular (called “conca”) forms where it is pressed at least twelve hours. The cheese is dry salted with or without a brine and ripened for at least one month (per discipline). Cylindrical Raschera has a diameter of 12–16 inches (30–40 centimeters), a convex edge of 3–4 inches (7–9 centimeters), and a weight of 15–20 pounds (7–9 kilograms) while the square shape has a side of 12–16 inches (30–40 centimeters), a straight edge of (5–6 inches) (12–15 centimeters), and a weight of 18–11 pounds (8–10 kilograms). The rind is thin, elastic, and regular, reddish-gray with red patches. The paste is white or ivory with small and sparse eyes, elastic, and consistent. The fresher cheeses have a fresh and delicate odor with milk and cream characteristics, while for the aged cheeses the odor is spicy, savory, and persistent.

See also ITALY.

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Giuseppe Zeppa

**raw-milk cheeses** are made from milk that has not been pasteurized. See PASTEURIZATION. Within the United States, no other processing technique is considered to be equivalent to pasteurization by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Therefore the use of milk subjected to ther-