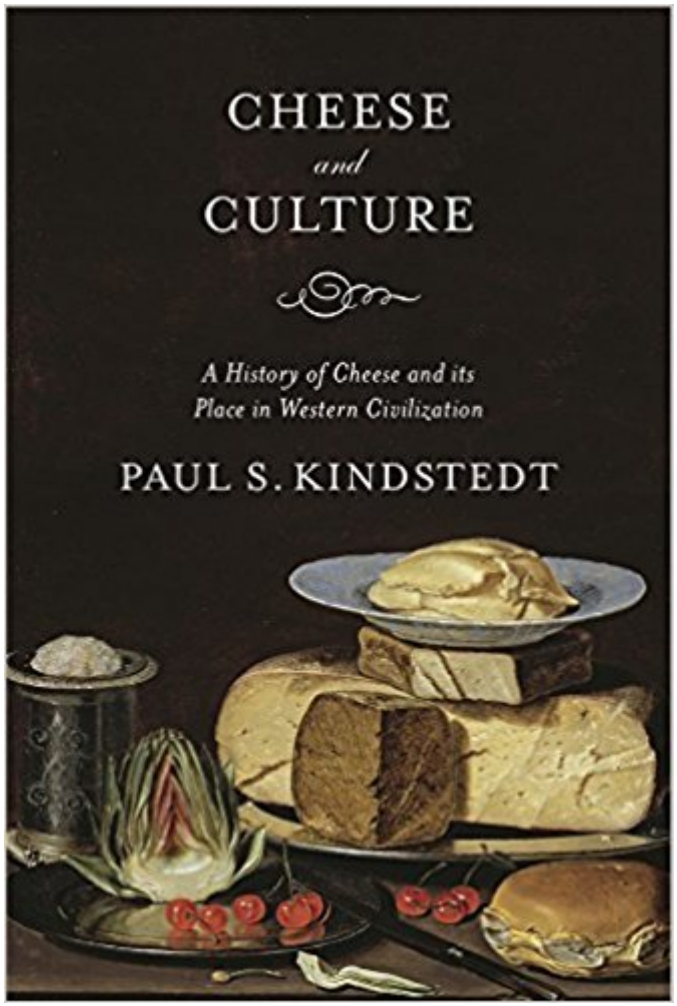
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Cheese And Culture: A History Of Cheese And Its Place In Western Civilization



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Synopsis

Behind every traditional type of cheese there is a fascinating story. By examining the role of the cheesemaker throughout world history and by understanding a few basic principles of cheese science and technology, we can see how different cheeses have been shaped by and tailored to their surrounding environment, as well as defined by their social and cultural context. Cheese and Culture endeavors to advance our appreciation of cheese origins by viewing human history through the eyes of a cheese scientist. There is also a larger story to be told, a grand narrative that binds all cheeses together into a single history that started with the discovery of cheese making and that is still unfolding to this day. This book reconstructs that 9000-year story based on the often fragmentary information that we have available. Cheese and Culture embarks on a journey that begins in the Neolithic Age and winds its way through the ensuing centuries to the present. This tour through cheese history intersects with some of the pivotal periods in human prehistory and ancient, classical, medieval, renaissance, and modern history that have shaped western civilization, for these periods also shaped the lives of cheesemakers and the diverse cheeses that they developed. The book offers a useful lens through which to view our twenty-first century attitudes toward cheese that we have inherited from our past, and our attitudes about the food system more broadly. This refreshingly original book will appeal to anyone who loves history, food, and especially good cheese.

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Customer Reviews

In this scholarly yet accessible history of cheese, noted food scientist Kindstedt plumbs the very earliest evidence of cheese making. Beginning in the shadowy Neolithic era, improving climatic conditions encouraged sheep and goat herding throughout the Fertile Crescent. Manufacture of pottery made possible the storage of excess milk and provided a transportation medium. Primitive acid-coagulated cheeses emerged for local consumption, but the discovery of rennet coagulation made possible hard cheeses with long shelf lives that could readily be shipped across land and sea. During the Middle Ages, innovative European monastic communities developed sophisticated techniques that generated a tremendous diversity of cheeses. Cheddar and Stilton shone in England, France became famous for its Roquefort and GruyÃƒÂ¨re, and Holland marketed Gouda and Edam. Colonization of the New World and the Industrial Revolution gave rise to todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s mass-produced cheeses, not always to the benefit of quality or flavor. --Mark Knoblauch --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

ForeWord Reviews-Cheese, glorious cheese. Who knew the 9,000 years of innovation, lore, history, and romance in your story? Who knew skim milk cheeses initially flourished not for diet reasons, but because they were cheaper for LondonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s working-classes? That higher-temperature cooking techniques contributed to the development of dry and aged cheeses? Or that economics, religion, social mores, climate, andÃ¢â ¬â ¢well, nearly anythingÃ¢â ¬â ¢has influenced the evolution of cheese in all its forms, styles, tastes, shapes, and uses? Paul S. Kindstedt knows, and now, through his impeccably researched, and carefully assembled book, any cheese lover can know, too.Ã Â KindstedtÃ¢â ¬â„¢s is a book written with scholarly rigor; yet, that detail-laden precision also makes it palatable for foodies curious about how and why food choices, production, and tastes have emerged over centuriesÃ¢â ¬â ¢the person jazzed to learn, for example, that Ã¢â ¬ËœGrated cheese seems to have occupied a special place in Greek cultureÃ¢â ¬â„¢ indicated by a wounded soldier being served Ã¢â ¬Ëœan elixir consisting of Pramnian wine on which (his slave) sprinkles goatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s-milk cheese, grated with a bronze grater,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ or that the seasonal movement of cows across south-central France inspired techniques for producing longer-lasting mountain cheeses. Like the range of cheeses available today, at times Cheese and Culture can be overwhelming, and the chapter on regulation reads like an alphabet soup of agency abbreviations and acronyms. But, like the veined or sharply flavored offerings on a cheese plate, one could choose to skip it and still be satiated.Library Journal-Kindstedt (food science, Univ. of Vermont) delivers an extensively researched and comprehensive history of cheese and its place in the development of Western civilization. Beginning with the ancient origins of cheese making and

moving through the classical, medieval, and Renaissance periods to the modern era, the author examines the traditional cheeses that came about during each period and how they were tailored to the environment and culture of the time. Finally, he explores the friction that has developed between the United States and the European Union over issues surrounding cheese making and trade, such as protecting traditional product names, food safety regulation, and the use of new agricultural technologies such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and hormones. VERDICT: Incorporating archaeology, religion, and literature, this detailed, accessible history will appeal to readers who enjoy food histories.Choice-Cheese scientist Kindstedt (Univ. of Vermont) has written a lively history of cheese through an examination of the cultural environments from which specific types of cheese-making traditions were born and, in some cases, have continued to the present. Kindstedt begins as early as possible with archaeological evidence of early fresh cheese making in the Fertile Crescent and its role in pre-Christian religious ritual. He quickly moves on to the introduction of rennet in cheese making and cheese in Greek and Roman civilizations and incorporation into daily life, both mundane and sacred. The last half of the book concentrates on the European cheese-making tradition and the role of monasteries in the development of aged cheeses. Surprisingly, Kindstedt does not spend too much time discussing factory-made cheese and the move away from traditional cheese making. But he does end with a timely discussion on raw milk safety and multinational trade laws that impact traditional cheeses, as well as a brief discussion on the artisanal cheese movement. Cheese and Culture is a well-researched, concise, and valuable addition to any food history collection. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through graduate students; general readers."All honor and respect to Aristaious -- the Greek god who taught us to make cheese -- and to Paul Kindstedt, who in Cheese and Culture teaches us its glorious history ever since."--Rob Kaufelt, proprietor, Murray’s Cheese NYC"From the Garden of Eden to the dairy industries of today, Paul S. Kindstedt unfolds the monumental story of cheese. Vast in scope, rich in detail, Cheese and Culture is a casein-inspired epic."--Eric LeMay, author of Immortal Milk"Cheese and Culture is the book both cheese professionals and cheese geeks have been waiting for. Professor Kindstedt gives us the mostly untold history of cheese and its societal import from 6500 BC to the present, answering all my cheese questions -- even the ones I didn’t know I had. Cheese and Culture is the most comprehensive cheese book ever written by an American, a great addition to our collective cheese library."--Gordon Edgar, cheese buyer, Rainbow Grocery Cooperative, San Francisco, and author of Cheesemonger: A Life on the Wedge"In this painstakingly researched yet passion-laced book, Paul Kindstedt shows us how cheese, from its rudimentary beginnings to today’s manufacturing, is inextricably linked to culture and, no less, to our

future. Cheese and Culture is essential reading for anyone who loves cheese and, equally, cares about the future of food itself."--Laura Werlin, author, Laura Werlin’s Cheese Essentials"I love this book - accessible in its prose and style with the breadth and depth of an academic work. All those interested in the role that cheesemaking has played in the development of the world we live in will come away after reading this book with context and understanding, and an intellectual appreciation of why cheese appeals to so many people at an emotional level. Paul Kindstedt has produced a seminal work in Cheese and Culture."--Mateo Kehler, cheesemaker, Jasper Hill Farm"Paul Kindstedt has fashioned a remarkable book about one of humankind’s most distinctive foods. Drawing upon comprehensive evidence from archaeology to contemporary artisan cheese making, Dr. Kindstedt shapes the complex story of cheese. He examines the impact of geography and climate, religion, social status and wealth, transportation and commerce... to describe and explain the 8,500-year evolution of cheese from Neolithic humans to present-day America. From archaeologists and anthropologists and historians to cheesemakers and consumers who want to deepen their understanding and appreciation of cheese, Dr. Kindstedt’s book will enlighten, entertain, and reveal the fascinating history and culture of cheese. Bravissimi e complimenti!"--Jeffrey Roberts, New England Culinary Institute, and author of The Atlas of American Artisan Cheese"Only a true scholar could weave together the complexity of history, anthropology, language, geography, religion and science to inform and enlighten our understanding of the evolution of cheese making throughout the millennia. Kindstedt, first and foremost with his discerning scientific mind, helps historians inform the heretofore mysteries in the cheese making continuum."--Catherine Donnelly, PhD, co-director, Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese"Dr. Kindstedt’s love and passion for the artisan cheese movement is inspiring. In his latest book, he has presented a beautiful and historically rich mosaic of the history of cheese on our little green planet. With reference to the past, and detailed attention paid to the present, as well as extrospection for the future, Dr. Kindstedt has created an amalgamation of artisan cheese reference, the like of which has not been attempted before."--Matt Jennings, co-owner/executive chef, Farmstead/La Laiterie, Providence, RI"This book will fascinate anyone who loves cheese. With a sweeping perspective, from the earliest prehistoric domestication of goats and sheep to the present, it chronicles how social, technological, and political developments gave rise to the vast array of cheeses we know and love."--Sandor Ellix Katz, author of The Art of Fermentation, The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved, and Wild Fermentation"No cheese lover or cheesemaker’s education will be complete without reading of the epic journey of cheese as it influences and is influenced by human civilization. Paul Kindstedt steers the reader through a vast sea of history with the steady, inspired hand and

confidence of a seasoned captain of his subject. What a gift to the world of cheese!"--Gianaclis Caldwell, cheesemaker, Pholia Farm, and author of The Farmstead Creamery Advisor "Given the vast amount that's been written about cheese down the centuries, the surprising absence of a scholarly work on the history of cheese is all the more remarkable. With Cheese and Culture, noted dairy scientist and author Paul Kindstedt has admirably filled this gap to an extent that should satisfy even the most avid cheese geek."--Kate Arding, co-founder, Culture magazine

One of my favorite books I have read about food and history. I appreciated Professor Kindstedt's approach to writing. This is not pop history; it is the real deal. He artfully tells an expansive global history with cheese as the leitmotif, touching on everything from empire building, to the gendered and classed history of food making to industrialization and globalization. As a graduate with a degree in history as well as a serious lover of cheese, I found this book a joy to read from beginning to end.

The author does a good job of covering the development of technologies that allowed cheese to be stored for long periods and shipped easily but does not provide much coverage of culinary aspects of cheese. In this book, history starts in the Middle East and then moves West and North, eventually going to England and the USA. We do learn that ancient peoples used grated cheese in cakes and wine but we don't learn how subsequent people ate cheese. The focus on cheese production and commerce is so strong that the reader can come away with the impression that Gouda and Edam cheeses differ principally in their coatings. The history ends at the beginning of the 20th Century with a discussion of Cheddar Cheese production in the USA and a discussion of recent trade disputes between the USA and the EU and safety issues.Lots of topics were left out. Geographical coverage is limited. Most European countries, Latin America, and the non-ancient Middle Eastern countries do not get mentioned (India is briefly mentioned). Products like cottage cheese that don't keep long don't get much attention. How cheese was used in recipes was not mentioned.To be fair I did learn some interesting things. For example, some ancient religions expected cheese tithes. Ancient Roman soldiers got cheese rations.

Not quite at the popular level, this a good history of something I think we don't even think of. That the history is so long was the surprise to me.

This is the 'must have' reference book for Cheese lovers and /or anyone involved in the Cheese

industry. Paul Kindstedt’s scholarship is authoritative yet accessible. With the skill of a raconteur, he unfolds the place of cheese through thousands of years and many civilisations. I felt bereft when I finished this wonderful book - I wanted to hear even move.

I don’t think most people think of cheese as an appropriate subject for a scholarly work, but it certainly serves that purpose here. Tons of citations and fascinating ideas not only about how cheese was shaped by the development of western culture but also about how cheese impacted that development itself. Really a fun read.

A lot of history into cheese making and its ties to historical events. It covered how various cheeses evolved into different types and why.

You have to be into cheese, the dairy industry or the mysteries of the history of anthropology to really aprecieate the book. The book would be interesting to anyone who wants to know how people ever figured out that animal milk products were edible.

Fantastic read. Got one for a foodie friend for a holiday gift.

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