

ENGLISH CHEESES



Stilton

The English love cheese and over 400 varieties of cheese produced in England. Most English cheeses are made using cow's milk and are usually named after the village, town or county from which they originate. All have unique flavours and textures. The most common are the harder varieties such as **Stilton**, **Cheddar**, **Red Leicester**, **Cheshire**, **Double Gloucester**. But there are also some delicious soft or semisoft cheeses like **Wensleydale**, **Stinking Bishop**, or **Somerset Brie**.

- **Stilton** is named after the village of Stilton and received PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status in 1996. This means that Stilton can only be produced in the three Counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and must be made from locally-produced pasteurized cow's milk. This blue cheese, known as "the King of English Cheeses", is formed into cylinders which are matured for at least nine weeks. During this time, they are regularly **pricked** with long **steel skewers** to allow the fungal spores (*Penicillium roqueforti*) to penetrate and give Stilton its characteristic greenish-blue veins. The texture of this British cheese varies from hard and crumbly to very soft, almost butter-like, depending on how mature it is. The older the cheese, the softer and smellier it is. There is also a white Stilton which has a fresh, milky flavour with a beautiful creamy background. It is ideal with fruit, crumbled onto salads or melted onto toast.



Cheddar

- **Cheddar** is the most widely-purchased and eaten cheese in the world. Originally made in England, today it is manufactured in many countries all over the world. Made from cow's milk, it has a slightly crumbly texture and is usually aged from six months up to five years, using the traditional Cheddar-making technique.



Stinking Bishop

- **Stinking Bishop**, despite its alarming name and **smell**, is mild-flavoured and delicious. One of the oldest types of cheese in the world, it is made by just one producer in Gloucestershire using milk from the rare Gloucester Cattle **breed**.

- **Wensleydale** is a fresh, crumbly, **flaky** cheese with a mild, slightly sweet flavour. It has been made since the 11th century when a group of Cistercian monks of the Roquefort area of France migrated to the Yorkshire area following the Norman Conquest of England.

- **Gloucester** is a traditional, unpasteurized, semi-hard cheese which has been made in Gloucestershire since the 16th century. There are two types of Gloucester cheese – Double and Single. Single Gloucester is made from partially skimmed cow’s milk, and is lighter and lower in fat. Double Gloucester is made from whole milk and allowed to mature longer so that it has a stronger flavour and a flaky texture.

GLOSSARY



• brand: marchio	• shrink-wrapped: imballato nella pellicola
• breed: razza	• smell: odore
• cider: sidro	• sprained ankle: distorsione alla caviglia
• concussion: commozione cerebrale	• steel skewers: spiedini di acciaio
• flaky: friabile	• sticky: appiccicoso
• perry: bevanda alcolica fatta con succo fermentato di pere	• stinky: puzzolente
• to prick: pungere	• waxy: ceroso
• rind: crosta	

Answer the following questions.

- What characteristics do British cheeses have in common?
- What English cheeses have the PDO?
- Why is Stilton called Blue Cheese?
- What are the characteristics of White Stilton?
- How long is Cheddar aged?
- What are the characteristics of Stinking Bishop cheese?
- How long has Wensleydale been made?
- What is the difference between Single and Double Gloucester?



Since **Cheddar's** name is not protected, it has been used and abused by many producers around the world. Thus all kinds of aberrations around the world are labelled "cheddar" – usually an orange **shrink-wrapped** block of **waxy** plastic with little taste. Today real farmhouse Cheddar (with the EU Protected Designation of Origin "West Country Farmhouse Cheddar") must be made on farms in the four counties of Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset from locally-produced raw cow's milk.

The remarkable smell of the **Stinking Bishop** cheese is in the **rind**, due to the process of washing the cheese in **perry** (an alcoholic drink similar to **cider**, made from the local "Stinking Bishop" variety of pears) every four weeks as the cheese matures (from six to eight weeks) giving the cheese a **stinky**, pungent, orange-coloured, **sticky** rind.

Gloucester cheese is famous for its role in the annual cheese-rolling contest held near Gloucester in the Cotswolds region of England. The competition, Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake, dates back hundreds of years and involves participants chasing a 7lb Double Gloucester cheese – which has a hard texture – down the hill in a series of races. The winner of each race wins the cheese. Due to the steepness and uneven surface of the hill there are usually a number of injuries, ranging from **sprained ankles** to broken bones and **concussion**.

In the 1990s, **Wensleydale** cheese sales had fallen so low that production risked being suspended. Thanks to the cartoon film "Wallace and Gromit", Wensleydale became more popular because it was Gromit the dog's favourite type of cheese. Later on, the special **brand** of "Wallace and Gromit Wensleydale" proved to be an enormous success and sales of Wensleydale cheeses jumped by 23%.



Wensleydale



Gloucester