

Explore the Sonoma Marin Cheese Trail



Cheesemakers of Marin and Sonoma County

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A PROJECT OF THE MARIN ECONOMIC FORUM

Driving Tours

Marin County Tour

Novato to Nicasio and Point Reyes Station (about 50 miles)

Driving Directions

Start at the **Marin French Cheese Company** right outside Novato, where you can take a tour, picnic, and taste their award-winning Rouge et Noir brie. Then travel west on the Point Reyes-Petaluma Road, make a quick detour onto Nicasio Valley Road to the quaint village of Nicasio. There you'll find **Nicasio Valley Cheese Company**. The Lafranchi family produces fantastic farmstead cheeses in the artisanal tradition of their Swiss-Italian cousins in Switzerland. Then retrace your steps to the Point Reyes-Petaluma Road and into the town of Point Reyes to Tomales Bay Foods (also known as **Cowgirl Creamery**) where you can watch cheesemaking through the window or take a more formal cheese class (reservations required). At the cheese counter taste Cowgirl cheeses and other local artisan cheeses.

Sonoma County Tour

Petaluma to Sonoma to Sebastopol (about 50 miles)

Driving Directions

Starting in the historic agricultural town of Petaluma, with its charming turn-of-the-century buildings and quaint downtown, stop by the Petaluma Creamery where you can sample **Spring Hill Cheese** (for tours of their creamery, please call ahead). Then head east out of town via Highway 116 and follow signs to Sonoma. To visit one of the oldest cheesemakers in the area, stop by **Vella Cheese Company**, known for their famous aged dry Jack. While still in Sonoma drop by the **Epicurean Connection** for the flavors of fresh and soft cheeses and more local fare. For more, travel north out of town on Highway 12 to Sebastopol to the **Matos Cheese Factory** to sample their St. George, a buttery semi-hard cheese made in the style of the Azores.

Explore the Sonoma Marin Cheese Trail

1. Achadinha Cheese Company

Petaluma
707-763-1025
www.achadinha.com

G O O O
Jim and Donna Pacheco's 900 goats graze year-round on verdant pastures at the Pacheco Family Dairy. The grass is supplemented with alfalfa and brewers' grain from local breweries. Donna handcrafts all cheeses. Achadinha also sells its own smoked summer goat sausage.

2. Andante Cheese

Petaluma
707-769-1379
www.andantedairy.com

CG O O
Soyoung Scanlan—dairy scientist, music lover, and former biochemist—gives musical names to her creamery and cheeses. Her products are designed to reveal the essence of the terroir, or microclimate, in which the milk and cheese are produced.

3. Barinaga Ranch Farmstead Sheep Milk Cheese

Marshall
www.barinagaranch.com

S O O O
Barinaga Ranch continues the shepherding traditions of Marcia Barinaga's Basque ancestors in Spain. Sheep graze year-round on more than 100 acres of pasture overlooking Tomales Bay. The rich, raw milk is made into a Basque-style cheese from April to October.

4. Bellwether Farms

Petaluma
707-478-8067
www.bellwetherfarms.com

CS O O
The Callahan family owns and operates Bellwether Farms in the heart of Sonoma County. They began milking their sheep and producing handcrafted cheeses in 1990, making them one of the first to be part of the revival of American artisan cheesemaking.

5. Bleating Heart Cheese

Sebastopol
www.bleatingheart.com

CS O
Fat Bottom Girl, a sheep cheese, was first produced by Bleating Heart in 2009. Sonoma Toma, a cow's milk cheese, followed soon after. In 2010, Bleating Heart partnered with Sonoma County ranchers Rex and Kerry Williams to establish California's fifth sheep dairy.

6. Bodega Artisan Cheese

Bodega
707-876-3483
www.BodegaArtisanCheese.com

CG O O O O
In keeping with farmstead traditions worldwide, Bodega's "country" cheeses are produced in small batches from one-to-two day old milk, then immediately made into cheese. This seals in the fresh, mild flavor, even in the aged cheeses.

7. Bohemian Creamery

Sebastopol
www.bohemiancreamery.com

CG O O
Lisa Gottreich and Miriam Block decided to break out of their midlife molds and fill new ones with innovative and compelling curds. They make a variety of Italian-style cheeses on their farm in Sebastopol.

8. Clover Stornetta Farms

Petaluma
707-778-8448
cloverstornetta.com

C
A family-owned and operated business, Clover Stornetta Farms works closely with select family farms in Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino counties. It processes and distributes their high-quality dairy products under the Clover Stornetta and Clover Organic Farms brands.

9. Cowgirl Creamery

80 Fourth Street
Point Reyes Station
415-663-9335
www.cowgirlcreamery.com

C O O O O O
In 1997, Sue Conley and Peggy Smith built a small creamery in downtown Point Reyes Station and began making handcrafted cheese with local organic milk. They now produce three fresh and six aged cheeses, and have a second creamery in Petaluma.

10. Epicurean Connection

18812 Sonoma Highway, Suite C
Sonoma
707-935-7960
www.sheanadavis.com

CG O O O O
Sheana Davis is a cheesemaker and proprietor of the Epicurean Connection shop, selling artisan and farmstead cheeses, plus regionally and sustainably produced products. After 20 years of enthusiastic support for local cheesemakers, she introduced her own artisan cheese line in 2009.

11. Laura Chenel's Chèvre

Sonoma
707-996-4477
www.laurachenel.com

G
Laura Chenel pioneered American goat cheesemaking. From small batches made on her Sebastopol farm in the 1970s to the new Sonoma creamery owned by French artisan cheese producer Rians Group, the brand continues to bring increased appreciation of goat cheese to the U.S.

12. Marin French Cheese Company

5000 Red Hill Road
Petaluma
800-292-6001
www.marinfrenchcheese.com

CG O O O O
The oldest continuously operating cheese factory in America, Marin French has specialized in handmade Brie and Camembert since 1865. In 2005, it was the first American producer to best France and other European countries in international competitions.

13. Matos Cheese Factory

3669 Llano Road
Santa Rosa
707-584-5283

C O O O
Joe and Mary Matos grew up in the Portuguese Azores on the lush volcanic island of Sao Jorge, noted for its delicious cheeses. They relocated to Santa Rosa in the 1970s, carrying the recipe for their native cheese with them.

14. McClelland Dairy

Petaluma
707-664-0452
www.mcclellanddairy.com

C O O O O O
This third-generation family dairy was founded by Robert McClelland, an Irish immigrant. It's now operated by his son George, George's wife Dora, and their daughter Jana. They specialize in European Style Organic Artisan Butter and have plans for other products in the future.

15. Nicasio Valley Cheese Company

5300 Nicasio Valley Road
Nicasio
415-662-6200
niciasiocheese.com

C O O O O O
The Lafranchi family enjoyed the traditional cheeses of their Swiss homeland and dreamed of making their own. Their organic dairy was the perfect resource to enable them to pay homage to their heritage. They made their first cheese in 2010 with Swiss mentor Maurizio Lorenzetti.

16. Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company

Point Reyes Station
415-663-8880
pointreyescheese.com
theforkatpointreyes.com

C O O O O O
The Giacomini family makes classic Point Reyes Original Blue and semi-hard Point Reyes Toma with milk from their own cows—processed within hours of milking. They offer hands-on and demo-style cooking classes at The Fork Culinary Center on their ranch.

17. Pugs Leap

Petaluma
707-238-2126
pugsleap.com

G O O O
After running their goat dairy, White Whale Farm, for several years, Anna and Dan Conner were eager to enter the cheese world. They took over Pugs Leap in 2010, continuing the high-quality cheesemaking tradition of the previous owners. Their herd is *Certified Humane*.

18. Ramini Mozzarella

Tomales RAMINI MOZZARELLA
415-690-6633
raminimozzarella.com

W O
Inspired by Italian mozzarella di bufala, Craig Ramini will use 100% water buffalo milk to produce a handcrafted cheese for his new company which is now in start-up mode. Ramini Mozzarella is scheduled to be available in 2012.

19. Redwood Hill Farm & Creamery

Sebastopol
707-823-8250
redwoodhill.com

G O O O O O
Located among picturesque redwoods, family-owned and operated Redwood Hill Farm has produced award-winning goat milk cheese since 1978. Their *Certified Humane Raised & Handled* herd benefits from a diversified breeding program, and their cheese, yogurt and kefir are minimally processed.

20. Saint Benoît Yogurt

Two Rock
530-400-4701
stbenoit.com

C O O O O
Saint Benoît is a small, family-owned business handcrafting organic, cream-top, French-style yogurt from the milk of Jersey cows. All products are made in small batches using locally sourced fruits and honey. They're sold in distinctive reusable crocks and jars.

21. Spring Hill Cheese Company

621 Western Avenue
Petaluma
707-762-3446
springhillcheese.com

C O O O O O
Rich, organic 100% Jersey milk is the secret of Larry Peter's handcrafted gourmet cheeses. Spring Hill Jersey cheeses are made on his farm just west of Petaluma.

22. Straus Family Creamery

Marshall
707-776-2887
www.strausfamilycreamery.com

C O O O O
A family-owned organic creamery, Straus produces milk, ice cream, yogurt, butter, frozen yogurt and soft-serve ice cream with cows' milk sourced from its own dairy in the hills above Tomales Bay and from three other local family farms. For tours, check malt.org.

23. Toluma Farms

Tomales
707-878-2041
tolumafarms.com

GS O O O
David Jablons and Tamara Hicks purchased their dairy in 2003, restored the land and protected it with an agricultural conservation easement. They began milking 200 goats in 2007, and plan to start producing goat and mixed-milk cheeses in 2011.

24. Two Rock Valley Goat Cheese

Two Rock
707-762-1812

G O O O O O
Dairyman Don DeBernardi's desire to make Swiss cheese like the type made by his relatives in Switzerland led him to transition from multi-generational dairy farming to producing a goat milk cheese aged on site at the DeBernardi Dairy.

25. Valley Ford Cheese Company

Valley Ford
707-293-5636
valleyfordcheese.com

C O O O O
Five generations of the Bianchi/Grossi family have raised dairy cows on this prime farmland in Sonoma County. Karen Bianchi Moreda and her son Joe now make Swiss-Italian-style cheese from the milk of their *Certified Humane Raised & Handled* Jersey herd.

26. Vella Cheese Company

315 2nd Street East
Sonoma
707-938-3232 • 800-848-0505
vellacheese.com

C O O O
The Vella family has made cheese in a stonewalled building on the historic Sonoma square since the company's founding in 1931 by Gaetano Vella. The cultures, the care and the personal hands-on techniques are the same as they were then.

27. Weirauch Farm & Creamery

Petaluma
weirauchfarm.com

CS O O O O O O
Joel and Carleen Weirauch raise dairy sheep for a seasonal raw aged cheese. They also produce organic cow cheese from local Jersey milk. They've made creative, green re-use of two portable classrooms for their creamery and milking parlor. Their operation is *Animal Welfare Approved*.

Key to the Cheesemakers

Type of Animal:

- C** Cow
- G** Goat
- S** Sheep
- W** Water Buffalo

- O** Available at Farmers' Markets
- R** Farmstead
- B** Mail Order
- L** Open to the Public
- Y** Organic
- T** Tours by Appointment

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