



Cheese Insider

302

The number of USA Cheese Specialist graduates around the world.

Meet our Graduates



Minami Kikuchi

We will be featuring a culinary or retail programs alumnus in each Cheese Insider Issue. This month, we introduce you to 2020 Japanese retail graduate Minami Kikuchi. Minami has been working in sales at Sekai Cheese Shokai Inc. since 2018.

What stood out most to Minami when taking the course was the creation of cheese boards. The level of detail and thought process excited her to create her own.

Minami also learned the importance of understanding a consumer's wants and needs to properly guide them in the cheese purchasing process. Listening and asking strategic questions were her two biggest takeaways.

Being heavily involved in the cheese industry for the past two years, Minami especially enjoys gorgonzola cream pasta and fresh mozzarella with Japanese soy sauce and wasabi.

Following the course, Minami's goal is to educate Japanese consumers on the variety and versatility of U.S. cheeses to increase sales and overall knowledge.



Welcome

Welcome to the Cheese Insider, a new quarterly newsletter exclusively for USA Cheese Specialists. Now that you have learned about (USA) cheese, we would like to continue channeling your inner cheese nerd and share with you some interesting facts, figures and tips through short stories and features.



Photo credit: www.guinnessworldrecords.com

Let's Talk Cheddar

Cheddar cheese was first created in the 12th century in the town of Cheddar, England. It made its way to America in the 18th century where American cheese makers added their own twists.

While cheddars were traditionally wrapped in cheesecloth and waxed, only specialty cheddars are made in this fashion today. The typical orange hue of U.S. cheddar comes from the addition of Annatto, a flavorless seed, during the cheesemaking process.

In November 2018, cheddar made the Guinness Book of World Records when the largest cheese sculpture in the world was carved out of a single block of aged cheddar. It weighed over 1.4 metric tons and featured an alligator in a chef's hat frying a turkey (see photo above).

Today, the United States is the single largest country producer of cheddar with 1.8 million metric tons produced in 2019. That's 5 times more than what is produced in England and 60% of world production!

Pro Tips



In the Kitchen

Cheddar cheese is known as a great cooking cheese. Its ability to melt, brown and incorporate into a sauce makes it ideal for most applications. When cooking with cheddar cheese, consider how long the cheddar has been aged to achieve the perfect melt.

Mild cheddar cheese, aged between 30 and 90 days, is soft and pliable. It can be used effectively for top browning under the boiler as it will soften and brown but stay in place with minimal flow.

Medium cheddar, aged between 3-6 months, is much creamier. It has good melting properties with moderate flow and browning, ideal for casseroles and top melting applications.

Aged cheddar, 9-12 months, starts very creamy, becoming slightly crumbly by about one year old. These cheddars are perfect for incorporating into sauces and soups.

In the Store

An important factor when it comes to selling cheeses in-store is the cleanliness of the counter and tools. Especially during these times, customers are looking closely at conditions where they are purchasing food.



Source: FMI & The Hartman Group

Best Practices:

- Keep your uniform clean by changing your apron after cutting a cheese wheel, for example.
- Keep work surfaces and cutting tools clean as you go, this will also prevent cross contamination.
- Use proper hair restraints: hair needs to be kept out of the face to prevent from touching it.

By the Numbers



AWARDS - Over the years, U.S. cheeses have proven to be a major contender in the global cheese game. Most recently, U.S. cheeses won 227 medals at the World Championship Cheese Contest, 77 of those being 1st place medals and that is only the beginning!

Chicken Queso Soup

- 30g butter, unsalted
- 2 red bell peppers, chopped
- 165g yellow onion, chopped
- 100g flour, all purpose
- 125g whole milk
- 907g chicken stock, unsalted
- 339g U.S. mild Cheddar, shredded
- 90g U.S. Monterey Jack, shredded
- 105g U.S. Pepper Jack, shredded
- 225g chicken, roasted shredded
- 125g corn
- 170g cooked rice
- Cilantro, fresh
- Tortilla chips



1. Place a Dutch oven or large stock pot over medium heat. Melt the butter, then add the red bell peppers and onion. Cook, stirring until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add flour to the pepper and onion mixture and stir to moisten. Continue to cook for another 3-4 minutes, until the flour is slightly colored.
3. Using a whisk, slowly add milk while stirring. Repeat with the chicken stock. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Continue to stir.
4. Slowly add the cheddar, Monterey Jack and Pepper Jack cheeses, stirring until fully combined with the liquid and there are no clumps.
5. When the cheese is fully melted, add the chicken, corn and rice. Stir and heat throughout for 5 more minutes.
6. Garnish with fresh cilantro and tortilla chips. Serve and enjoy!

[Watch the recipe video here](#)

USA Cheese Community Feature



In future issues of this newsletter, we will feature U.S. cheesemakers and suppliers so you get to know the people behind the great USA cheeses. But at this particular time, we are more interested in finding out how you are all doing despite this incredibly difficult and surreal challenge that the

COVID-19 pandemic has thrown at humanity.

Staff of the USA Cheese Guild has had the honor and pleasure of meeting many of you during some of the USA Cheese Specialist classes and as our friends and as members of our global USA Cheese Community, we truly hope you and your loved ones are doing well and are staying healthy.

To our chef friends, we hope your livelihood wasn't too affected. Even though the

world shut down for a while, people cannot wait to come back to your restaurants and eat your wonderful culinary creations so keep on cooking (with a little USA cheese love)! And to our friends in the retail business, we thank you for keeping shelves stocked with food to keep the world going. The U.S. cheese industry is with you.

Let us know how you are doing by dropping us a note at cheeseinsider@usacheeseguild.org. Please stay safe!



We Need You!

This newsletter is for you! We'd love to hear your feedback on what content would be helpful in broadening your skills and knowledge. Please take a minute to answer a couple questions so we may better refine our content [here](#).



Stay Connected

Request to join our private USA Cheese Specialists Community [here](#).

