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ARI'S TOP 5

you really can taste the difference!



Six Reasons Why We Work to Save The Emmentaler®

*When dairy deliciousness and doing the right thing
come together*

While the country seems suffused in controversy on any number of social issues, here's a cause that could bring anyone who loves great food into the fold: the campaign to Save The Emmentaler® is calling for our help!

Gourmino's Save The Emmentaler initiative is committed to supporting "small-scale cheesemakers and their centuries-old craft, promoting the genuine, natural qualities of Emmentaler AOP as an authentic product that goes beyond tradition to ensure its continued excellence." I'm on board!! If you'd like to enlist as well, the action step is easy—swing by the Deli and buy a bit of this terrific cheese! (If you're out of town, just email service@zingermans.com and we can ship you some!). Don't delay! Supplies of this handmade artisan offering are, not surprisingly, sort of limited!

Emmentaler AOP has long been revered as the "king of Swiss cheeses"; it comes in a massive, 30-inch diameter, 200-pound wheel, and features distinctive holes. Its iconic shape is so well-known that children often draw it when depicting cheese. Tracing its origins to the 13th century, Emmentaler AOP is still crafted by this small number of tradition-minded cheesemakers using the same centuries-old methods. Old-school Emmentaler like this is made only in the Emme Valley, in the central part of Switzerland, about two-thirds of the way from Zurich to Bern. It dates back to the same era as the founding of the Swiss democratic system, in the late 13th century and has been exported since the 16th century. Minimum standards have been legally in place since the formation of the Swiss Cheese Union in 1901, the year before the Deli's building was built. The far stricter Appellation d'Origin standards were put in place a century later, and these are the standards that the Emmentaler AOP we're

working so hard to save has exceeded. You really *can* taste the difference. It is, in truth, a truly remarkable cheese. The mission of the Save the Emmentaler movement is both simple and powerful: “Preserve Emmentaler AOP’s integrity through sustainable, small-scale cheesemaking and traditional ripening methods.” Here are six reasons that it really resonates deeply for me.

1. It tastes terrific—there are hundreds of “Swiss cheeses” in the world, but they are not the same as this one, the original. It is to the flavor of supermarket “Swiss” what a stuffed whale would be to the sort that swims in the ocean and that most everyone reading this will also want to help save. It is an ideal fit for our longstanding definition of quality at Zingerman’s: full-flavored and traditionally made.
2. When a community loses its cheese, it loses part of its spirit and connection to place. As Sinead O’Connor sang in “I Want to Talk About Ireland,” “We’ve lost contact with our history ... And this is what’s wrong with us.” The work behind Save the Emmentaler was established to keep that from happening. Rooted, connected community is the core of caring; healthy countries are made up of caring communities.
3. Switzerland is one of the oldest democracies in the world, and craft-based, cheesemaking spread throughout the country is one of its anchors, economically, environmentally, agriculturally, and culturally.
4. The more we can demonstrate that there IS a viable market for traditional foods like this traditional Emmentaler AOP, the more people are likely to take on the work of making them.
5. Full-flavored foods like this create joy and beauty in the world. And we could certainly use more of both!
6. As I discussed in the pamphlet “[A Revolution of Dignity in the Twenty-First Century Workplace](#),” this system is built on the foundation of dignity at every level. The farmers, the cows, the land, the community, the cheese, and the customers—all are treated with respect and care in this wonderfully regenerative process.

What makes this cheese so special? It starts with the cows. They graze on a diverse diet of grasses and herbs in open meadows, which gives the milk—and the cheese—a unique and rich flavor. The herds are small, usually just 12 to 20

cows, allowing farmers to maintain a close connection with each animal. Healthier, well-cared-for cows naturally produce higher-quality milk. The milk itself is raw and delivered to the dairy twice a day. It still arrives in old-school milk cans—unlike industrial pumping (which is faster but can damage the delicate fat globules in the milk), cans can help preserve quality. The milk is made into cheese within 12 hours of milking, ensuring it's as fresh as possible when the process begins.

Gourmino itself was founded nearly a quarter century ago by a quintet of quality-conscious farmers in the interest of helping sustain traditional Swiss cheeses into the 21st century. Today the group is up to 12 producers, and, I will say with confidence that every single cheese we've ever gotten from Gourmino has been great!

The Emmentaler AOP Reserve we have on hand right now was made by the Schöpfer family at the Mountain Dairy of Kleinstein. It's been aged for an impressive two years. The affinage process begins in Gourmino's Langnau Emmental cellars, where the wheels are hand-washed weekly. Later, the best wheels are moved to the facility in Reichenbach Mountain Galleries for what they refer to as "Affinage *in* the Mountain," since the cellar is literally carved into the mountain.

With its 24 months of maturing, it should be no surprise that the flavor of the Emmentaler AOP Reserve is meaty, concentrated, complex, and compelling. There's a small touch of sweetness, a good bit of lovely bitterness. Eat it at room temperature to access its full flavor. Great with some of the heirloom apples we can still get around here this time of year! Totally terrific on slices of Dinkelbrot that I wrote about right below, which have been spread generously with Vermont Creamery Cultured Butter.

For anyone who loves full-flavored traditional cheese, the Emmentaler AOP Reserve is a really great choice! And, the more we eat it, the more demand goes up, the more effective the campaign to Save the Emmentaler is going to be!



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Ari



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