

MONTGOMERY'S CHEDDAR



MILK	Unpasteurised cows milk
RENNET	Traditional animal rennet
MADE BY	Jamie Montgomery and Steve Bridges
REGION	Manor Farm, North Cadbury, Somerset
FLAVOUR & TEXTURE	Rich, sweet, fruity, nutty, beefy flavours. Sometimes reminiscent of the caramelised edge of a Sunday roast. The texture is drier than most other cheddars with a grainy and crystalline crunch as it ages.

In the pantheon of cheddars gracing our counter, Montgomery's Cheddar is king. This is one of the three truly traditional cheddars still to be made in the country today.

James Montgomery is ever attentive to the nuances of flavour as this is the fruit of his planning and work with the farming. He thoroughly researches the herd's feed in order to get the right levels of fat and protein in the milk. It's a careful balance between grass, solid food like silage or hay and starches or sugars (potatoes grown by his brother Archie for instance).

Fat and protein levels in the milk are carefully monitored also because it has a huge effect on the texture of the cheese. Too much fat and you get a moist cheese, which tends to have tangier sharper flavours rather than the sweet, nutty meatiness that characterise a Montgomerys.

In 2004, James Montgomery, George Keen (Keens) and Richard Calver (Westcombe) defined what a traditional cheddar should be for an initiative called the Ark of Taste, led by the Italian group Slow Food in order to market and protect traditional foods.

These are their criteria for Artisan Somerset cheddar:

- 1 The cheese is only made in Somerset
- 2 It is made using unpasteurised milk from the farmer's own herd
- 3 They use only traditional pint starters, a yoghurt-like culture, a pint of which which is grown in a churn of milk before being added to the vat. The other type of starter is called DVI and is a powder. Montgomerys use a pint starter cultured at Marylands Farm. These cultures were taken from naturally occurring bacteria in unpasteurised Somerset milk.
- 4 The curd is set with traditional animal rennet.
- 5 Cheeses are made in the cylindrical form and bound in cloth.
- 6 They are aged for a minimum of one year.

Unlike other wholesalers, Randolph visits the farm every 8 weeks to select cheese with James Montgomery. We are able to select the bathes we like best, which is very important as Cheddar tastes hugely different from one day's make to the next.

