

Spanish cheeses and wines

There are many different kinds of cheese in Spain. I think it might not be when you come into the supermarkets and looking in the shelf's with cheese. Often there are many kinds of Manchego, many without much flavor. Maybe Cabrales, some foreign cheeses and some other odds and ends. But Spain is a much larger cheese country than that! There are many many variations of cheese, it's just that it probably is a bit poor to showcase their products in the stores of the Costa del Sol. Today's article is no mapping of Spain as cheese country, but I have concentrated on the cheeses that are easy to find on store shelves and what you can drink to that.

For the cheese it look nice to have grapes. They are good tasting, but objectionable to have to cheese and related beverage because the acid in the grapes easily collide with the acid in the beverage. Better then to have some mild peppers, pears, celery, another sweet fruit and some marmalade. The sweetness balance the saltiness of the cheese. The biscuits should be



neutral or sweet. Avoid salty crackers as many cheeses have saltiness enough. In Spain the often eat Carne de Membrillo to the cheese, it is a jam made from quince.

When it comes to the choice of cheese, it is best to choose cheeses that have the same strength of flavor. Self I do the exact opposite! I like flavorful mild smear-ripened cheeses, a hard cheese with a lot of flavor and finishes with a

flowing Gorgonzola! Disaster? The answer is quite simple. I eat the mild cheese first and enjoying the combination of cheese, fruit and beverage. It can be hard to find a drink to suit all cheeses. But I just sett the table with two glasses and continue to enjoy life and the cheese with a new wine. A closure with strong flavors and sweetness suits me admirably.

Do not forget to take out the cheese from the fridge a few hours before dinner so that they have room temperature so that the flavors have time to develop.

Spanish cheeses are not only Manchego. Spain has 27 original branded cheeses against Sweden two including Västerbotten. There are, as mentioned earlier, a rich cheese tradition i Spain.

It is not always that easy to choose beverage to Spanish cheeses as they have slightly different tastes than we are accustomed. Everything from the very strong and fragrant Tarta de Casar to the soft and smooth taste in Tetilla. In order to structure the choice of beverages, we divide the cheese into groups

Sheep and Goat cheese (Oveja and Cabra)

This group includes several different sorts, but all are made with goat's milk which gives them a distinct character and a real sour taste. We find sheep's milk cheeses, white and blue cheeses, matured hard cheeses. You can also find cheeses with confusion goat / sheep milk with cow's milk.

The above mentioned Manchego belong to this group. Made from the milk of the Manchego sheep. The cheese is stored between 60 days and two years. Usually made from pasteurized milk but can also be made of raw milk and then labeled with the word Artesanal. Look for a curado so you get a little taste of the cheese. Drink an Amontillado to the cheese.

Tarta del Casar is another origin-labeled sheep cheese from Extremadura with milk from the Merina sheep. The cheese is aged for at least 60 days. When serving, it must be creamy and then has a very strong flavor. Queso de Cabra from the mountains of Andalucia is a creamy goat cheese like Camembert with a mild flavor. Monte Enebro is an exciting cheese from the

Madrid region. From Navarra comes Roncal that during ripening period develops a piquant flavor.



A piece of goat cheese on a slice of boiled beetroot with curled honey and walnuts gratinated in the oven a few minutes, or as we serve cheese at El Castillo, fried cheese balls on a beetroot salad with honey and walnuts, are examples of starters with a distinct taste of goat cheese.

As these goat cheeses often have a high acid, they fit well with wines that also have high acidity. A classic for those cheeses are wines with grape Sauvignon Blanc. Fresh and a little sour wine balances the acid in the cheese. But why not go the whole way and try a Cava or wine from Spain's best white wine region of Galicia with grape Albarino.

Green and blue mold cheese

Those cheeses have usually a salty and intense flavor. There is a distinct flavor of the mold. The texture can range from creamy to a little dry and crumbly. In this category we find the Spanish Cabrales cheese, Queso Azul de Hoja from Asturias and other famous cheeses from abroad in this category is Roqueford, Stilton, Gorgonzola.



The intense flavor and saltiness matched with a tasty beverage with acidity and sweetness. Sweet white wines and sweet sherry from Jerez such as Pedro Ximenez fit well, like Port wine.

Smear-ripened cheeses

Tetilla, looks like a cows teat some say, is made from cow's milk. The texture is soft with a mild, buttery flavor. Coming from Galicia in Spain's northwestern corner.

Another famous cheese is Mahon with its orange surface from the island of Menorca. Has a mild flavor. Port Salut is probably the northeuropean cheese that is closest to resembling the Spanish ones.

Most cheeses have a mild taste and fit with a little fuller beverage, such as a white wine grape Gewurtztraminer (i e the wine Gato), or why not look for a Spanish Ale. Rieslings should also fit well.

Enjoy your your cheeses!

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