

BONUS MINI MAG: BEER *from* PUB TO PANTRY

the word on cheese

culture

Scoop
Y
E CREAM p. 40

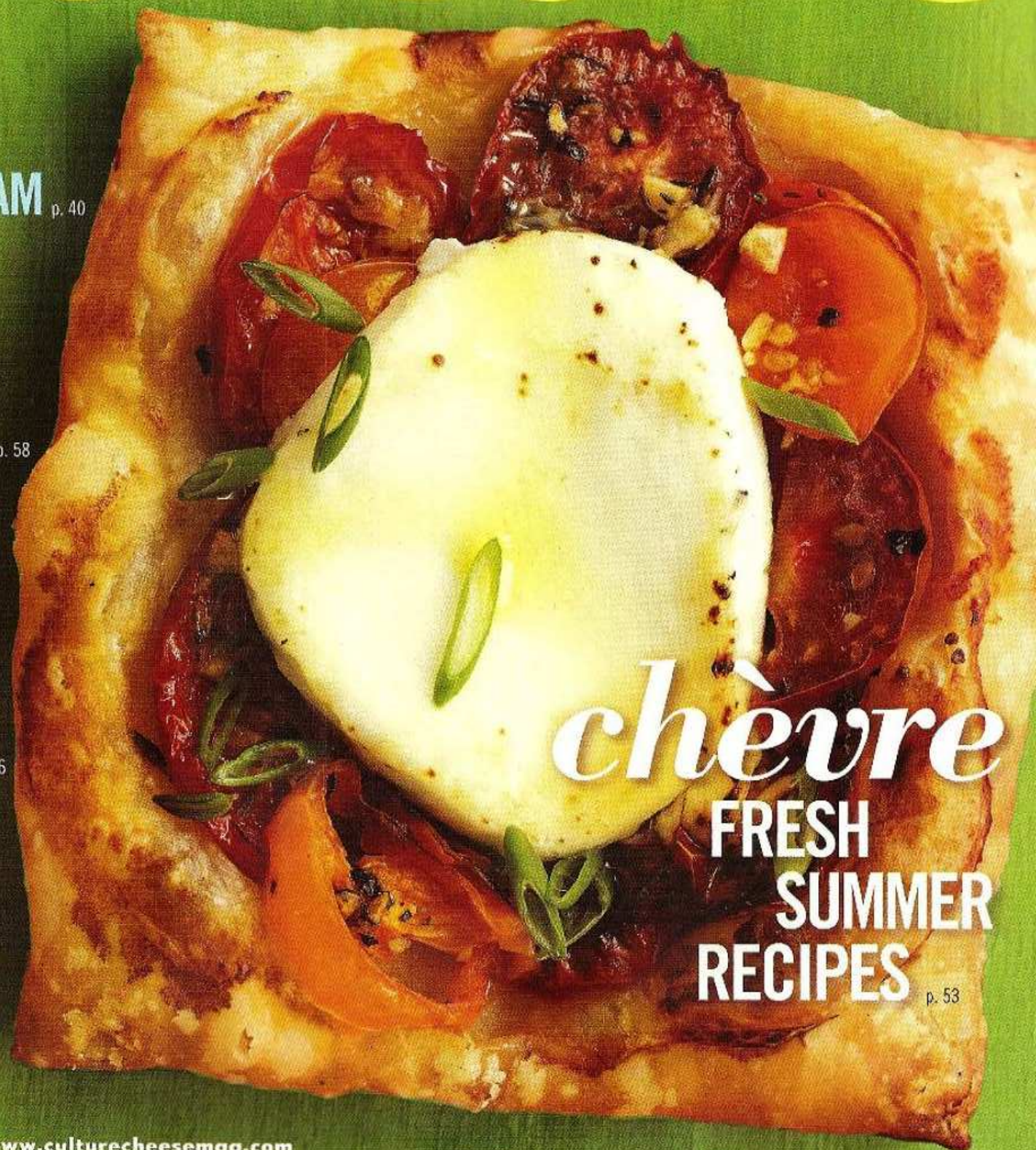
AT'S HOT:
cheese
the
GRILL p. 58

3
viss
EASE
EATS p. 76

ER 13



www.culturecheesemag.com

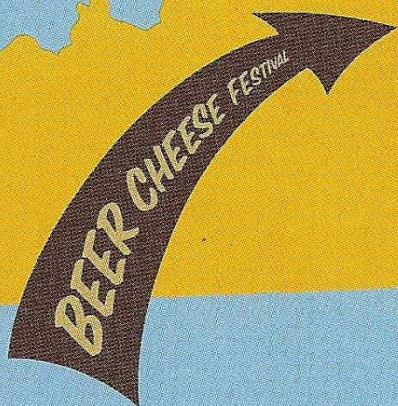


chèvre
FRESH
SUMMER
RECIPES p. 53

"Once I started homebrewing, I caught the bug and knew after my first batch that this is what I wanted to do with my life." —DOGFISH HEAD BREWERY'S SAM CALAGIONE p. 48

WRITTEN BY Fiona Young-Brown

Spread the ★ LOVE



In Kentucky, beer with cheese is more than a pairing; it's a dish in itself

From bars and diners to the finest award-winning restaurants, there's one thing that is sure to be on the menu throughout central Kentucky: beer cheese. Yet the combination of cheese, beer, and spices that makes this savory spread such a classic remains relatively unknown to anyone outside the region.

The origins of beer cheese are hotly debated, I discovered, while prepping myself for the job of being a judge at the state's annual Beer Cheese Festival. Many historians believe it originated in bars in the late 19th century. Not wanting to waste flat beer, barkeepers added it to cheese and hot sauce, creating a spicy dip they could serve the following day.

Beer cheese bears a striking resemblance to several cheese dishes that would have been introduced by immigrants, including Welsh rarebit and Obatzter, a cheese spread of German origin. While the latter traditionally contains Camembert, it is plausible that German bartenders substituted whatever cheese was available. Many modern beer cheese producers claim that in the past every Kentucky family had a recipe, passed down through generations.

Whatever the true origins of beer cheese, the savviest marketer was Johnny Allman of

PHOTO: Andrea Duarte



Winchester. The owner of a small diner, Johnny served his cousin Joe's "snappy cheese" in the 1940s. Joe had recently moved back to Kentucky from Arizona and missed the spicy food. Allman's snappy cheese became so popular that to this day it is accepted as the original, despite evidence to the contrary. Johnny Allman's diner is long gone, but his brand of beer cheese continues.

Today beer cheese is big business in central Kentucky. There is even an annual festival devoted to the spicy cheese product. Since its debut in 2009, the Beer Cheese Festival has grown to attract more than ten thousand visitors. The highlight of the festival is its competition, with categories for both professional and amateur beer cheese makers.

I was among the judges for the 2012 amateur division, which required carefully tasting and ranking each of the 36 entries, grading for consistency and flavor. Our panel of three judges eventually chose a winner, Mrs. Ollie Puckett. She started making her own beer cheese about

seven years ago after trying some that others had made and thinking she could do better. Her tip for a good beer cheese? "Whip, whip, whip." She beats hers for at least 20 minutes until she has a good spreading consistency.

Adding to Puckett's advice, previous beer cheese festival winners offer some other tips. Wesley Bunch, recipient of the 2012 People's Choice Award for Big Russ's Beer Cheese, says the key is "good, honest ingredients with no additives." Diane Evans of Kentucky Beer Cheese, winner of the 2011 professional

“**Not wanting to waste flat beer, barkeepers added it to cheese and hot sauce, creating a spicy dip they could serve the following day.**”

DPI Specialty Foods

*Worldwide Sourcing.
Regional Cheese Specialists.*

*DPI Specialty Foods
focuses on highly
perishable specialty foods
that bring a measure of
distinction and excellence
to the marketplace.*

*We believe in building
business through one-
on-one relationships.*

*We bring to market the
very finest in specialty
retail and food
service products from
around the world.*

www.dpispecialtyfoods.com



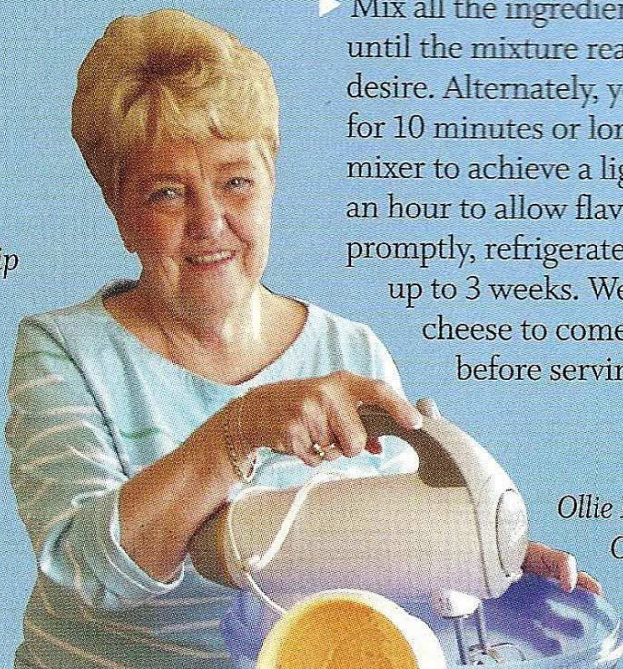
category, advises keeping it simple: "Just cheddar cheese, beer and spices."

Chances are that if you haven't visited central Kentucky, you haven't heard of beer cheese. But that doesn't mean you can't enjoy this popular, versatile, and easy-to-make cheese spread in your own locale. Try this basic recipe, making it as spicy as you like.

Homemade Beer Cheese

Beer cheese can be used as a dip with crackers or carrots, as a spread, or as a topping for burgers and hot dogs. This is the basic recipe, but the taste can vary according to the cheese, beer, and amount of spices you add.

PHOTO: David Puckett



MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

- 1 pound sharp cheddar cheese, crumbled
- ½ cup flat beer
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce, or more to taste

► Mix all the ingredients together in a blender until the mixture reaches the texture you desire. Alternately, you can beat the mixture for 10 minutes or longer with an electric mixer to achieve a lighter texture. Set aside for an hour to allow flavors to meld. If not serving promptly, refrigerate beer cheese. It'll keep for up to 3 weeks. We prefer to allow the beer cheese to come to room temperature before serving.

Ollie Puckett, winner of the Beer Cheese Festival's amateur division

It's not cheese that's *paired* with beer.



It's cheese that's
bathed
in it.

Announcing this year's limited edition Blues & Brews™ Series, made with award-winning St. Pete's Select® blue cheese soaked in various styles of Summit Brewing Co.® beer. This beer bath intensifies the natural blue flavors and gives this cheese a golden hue and an earthy finish.

SummerTime • OktoberFest • WinterFest



**CAVES OF
FARIBAULT®**
cavesoffaribault.com