24 Origins of Cheese Names - mental_floss - List Show (243)

List Show
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(0:00) Hi, I'm John Green, welcome to my salon, this is Mental Floss on Youtube.

(0:04) And did you know that Gouda cheese is Dutch? It's named after the dutch city of Gouda, or How-da (pronunciation). It's been made in the city's surrounding area for at least a thousand years, and then it would be brought into the city to be sold and traded there. That's the first of many cheese name origins that I am going to share with you today, in this video presented by Geico.

(0:22) *theme song*

(0:31) Like many cheeses, Camembert is also named after a place, the Camembert region of France, or as the French call it, Fronce (pronunciation). Sorry, I took 3 years of high school French; Fronce is the only French word I know, so I have to brag about it. The cheese was invented there in 1791 by the farmer Marie Harel. She was actually trying to follow the advice of a priest she'd met from Brie.

(0:51) Which means, of course, that Brie is also named after a place. By the way, my favorite cheese in the world? Brie. My least favorite cheese in the world? The crust of brie.

(0:59) Now, we don't know for sure when brie was invented, but there are accounts of Charlemagne enjoying a cheese near Meaux, which is a town in Brie.

(1:07) They've been making Feta since around the 8th century BCE in Greece. The word is Greek, but it's borrowed from a similar Italian word, meaning slice.

(1:15) Monterey Jack is named after both a place and a person. The place, Monterey, California, where Mexican Franciscan friars made the cheese in the 1700s. Then, a business man named David Jack started selling it, and added his name. We don't have a picture of him, but he probably looked like this

(1:29) Monterey Jack is often mixed with Colby cheese, which originated in Colby, Wisconsin. It might have had a different name if it was invented a little earlier, though, because it was created in 1874, just 3 years after the town was founded. The cheese was first made by Joseph F. Steinwand, man if it had just been invented before Colby was founded, we could call it Steinwand.

(1:49) Stilton is named after the UK village of Stilton, but it's actually illegal to make Stilton in Stilton, because Stilton cheese is so disgusting. No, actually, it's because Stilton is where the cheese was sold, not where it was made, and when geographic protection for cheeses came in, Stilton wasn't one of the areas where Stilton could actually be made.

(2:10) Cottage cheese has been a thing since ancient Greece and Egypt, but it's only been called that since the 1800s, because it was often made in cottages.

(2:18) Cheshire cheese is the oldest British cheese, dating from at least the 12th century, and it's named after the English county of Cheshire. Same place the cats come from, I assume.

(2:25) The French cheese Munster - which is different from Muenster with an "e" cheese - is named after the town of Munster, in France. The town was named in the 7th century for it's monastery, and the cheese was originally made in those Monks' cellars.

(2:40) It's believed that Roquefort cheese has existed since at least the first century in Rome because Pliny the Elder wrote about it. Nowadays it's a law, actually, that cheese can only be called Roquefort if was made out of sheep's milk and aged in the caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in France. French fans of mental floss, how great is my pronunciation of your wonderful homeland?

(2:59) Alright, on to Cheddar cheese, finally something I can pronounce. Also named for the caves it was made in, these are in the village of Cheddar in Somerset, South West England.

(3:07) Manchego cheese is produced in Spain. It gets its name from the breed of sheep whose milk is in the cheese - manchega sheep. By the way, the cheese may not have been named after a place, but the sheep are. They come from the La Mancha region of Spain.

(3:18) Pecorino is also a sheep's cheese - in fact, it's named for the Italian word for "sheep," pecora.

(3:23) Another cheese named after an animal, Buche de Chèvre, which is French for "roll of goat cheese."

(3:28) Gruyère is from the Gruyère region of Switzerland, and it's been made there since at least the 12th century. It was so popular that they started selling it in the cheese capitals, France and Italy.

(3:37) Speaking of Switzerland, you can probably guess that they gave us Swiss cheese, and they did, but in Switzerland it's known as Emmental cheese, after the region where it was invented. Most of what we call Swiss cheese is actually manufactured in the United States.

(3:50) Provolone is an Italian word meaning "large provola," and provola is a different Italian cheese. It's believed that it's named after a tradition where religious leaders visiting the convent of San Lorenzo in Capua would be offered a mozza a provetura meaning (That was really good, really good Italian!!). Anyway, as my fellow Italian speakers already know, that means like a sample of the main cheese.

(4:12) And if the word mozza sounds familiar, it should, because it would spin off into Mozzarella. The Italian word mozzare means to cut off, and the cheese is made by cutting curds and making them into balls. By the way, is this episode making anyone else hungry for extra cheese pizza, or is it just me and Big Zombie?

(4:28) Parmesan was created to resemble the older Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, which explains the name. Parmigiano-Reggiano is named after a couple different Italian provinces, Parma and Reggio Emilia.

(4:38) Ricotta is the Italian word for "recooked." It's called that because Ricotta is made of the whey that's left over after the curds are removed.

(4:45) Limburger cheese is named after the Duchy of Limburg, where it was first produced in the 19th century. The Duchy of Limburg was a state in the Holy Roman Empire, which included modern-day Belgium and Germany and the Netherlands, but nowadays most of the cheese comes from Germany.

(4:58) Gorgonzola is named after the town northern Italy where residents claim to have invented the cheese. The legend goes that a cheese maker went to meet his girlfriend one night before he had the chance to finish making a batch of cheese, so the next day he came back to find that some mold had grown over his batch of cheese. He dumped that batch in with a new batch so he wouldn't get fired, and that's how the blue veins and unique odor emerged.

(5:19) And finally, I return to my salon to tell you that American cheese got it's name in the late 18th century because colonists in the Americas started exporting Cheddar cheese back to Britain. So

it was the English who dubbed it American cheese. For a while it was known here as Yellow or Store cheese, then about a century later it got nicknames like Factory cheese, Rat Trap cheese, or Rat cheese. But, you know, there's something about the name American cheese that's just a little more appetizing.

(5:45) Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people (gestures), and made possible by our friends at Geico, so thanks to them as well. Every week you can get several cheesy videos here at Mental Floss. Usually they aren't about cheese, but they always feature cheesy jokes, so don't forget to subscribe. And, as we say in my hometown, Don't Forget to Be Awesome.