

cooking school

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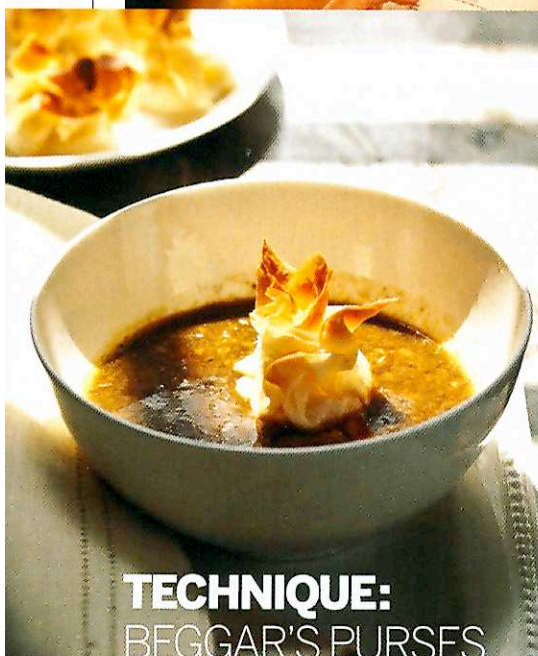
say goat cheese

A NEW YORK FARMER SHARES HER **PASSION** **FOR CHEESEMAKING**

A sustainable organic farm in New York's tony Westchester County? Admittedly not the norm. Equally unexpected are award-winning goat cheeses, farming camps for children, and cooking classes that cover categories from seasonal produce to basic knife skills. But for Lisa Schwartz, the unanticipated is the essence of Rainbeau Ridge farm.

After living in Japan and becoming enamored with the culture's love of fresh ingredients and meticulous preparation, Lisa began teaching Asian cooking in ►

Rainbeau Ridge's handcrafted goat cheeses continue an artisanal cheesemaking tradition dating back to Greek and Roman times.



TECHNIQUE: BEGGAR'S PURSES

her Bedford Hills home. Eventually she and husband Mark, a financial consultant specializing in renewable energy resources, purchased a neighboring property and reconstructed the original 15-acre gentleman's farm.

For 10 years Lisa has been farming Rainbeau Ridge, preserving the land through traditional agricultural practices. She balances overseeing the extensive gardens and a livestock menagerie—33 goats and 16 kids, sheep, cows, llamas, heirloom turkeys, free-range chickens, and a couple of peacocks—with the production of her award-winning goat cheeses and the cooking classes.

Today we're at Rainbeau Ridge to attend a "Cooking with Goat Cheese"

class, held in the airy farmhouse kitchen. Limited to 12 students, classes are held weekday mornings and are taught by coordinator Nicki Sizemore, local chefs, or Lisa herself. Most of my classmates—several are frequent attendees—find their way to this off-the-beaten-path farm from the surrounding metro area.

Our convivial group gathers for coffee and instruction around the spacious island. "There's hardly a vegetable that doesn't pair with goat cheese, especially those that can be grilled or roasted," Lisa explains. "Find quality ingredients that are seasonal, local, and fresh. Go to the market, see what's there, and say, 'That's what I'm having for dinner.' Then add goat cheese," she says with a wink.

Our lesson begins with Pumpkin-Goat Cheese Cheesecake, which bakes while the other recipes are prepared. The flavor combines pumpkin scented with classic pumpkin pie spices—cinnamon, allspice, and nutmeg—with a layer of tangy whipped goat cheese. A gingersnap ➤



1 Layer 3 sheets of thawed phyllo dough, brushing each sheet with butter. Cut layered phyllo into 8 equal rectangles.

2 Spoon goat cheese into center of each phyllo rectangle. (Use about 1½ teaspoons goat cheese for each.)

3 Gather four corners of each rectangle to create a beggar's purse. Gently pinch phyllo together below the top of purse.

4 Place purses on baking sheet lined with parchment or silicone baking mat. Bake in 350°F oven for 13 to 15 minutes.

DETAILS An easy 50-minute drive from Manhattan, Rainbeau Ridge is located at 49 David's Way, Bedford Hills, NY 10507. Classes are held weekdays, 9:30–11:30 a.m., and average \$75 per class. For information, call 914/234-2197 or visit rainbeauridge.com.

ChevreLog

A light, tangy, and aromatic bloomy-rinded cheese with a hint of Camembert. Serve it with pear or fig jam, slice over light greens, or place on top of bruschetta.

Meridien

Big flavor; hints of lemon and salt from ash veining. A good pairing with grilled vegetables or beet salad.

ChevreLait

Creamy, mellow, tangy. Stir into mac 'n' cheese.

MontVivant

Creamy, but dense and firm with a slight touch of blue cheese. The complex flavors make it a perfect cheese to pair with oaky chardonnays and peppery zinfandels.

Cranberry-Walnut

A spreadable cheese with fresh, clean, bright flavors. Lovely for breakfast spread on a toasted grain bread or for dessert on sweet brown breads such as fig or date.



Find Rainbeau Ridge recipes **at** traditionalhome.com

Dine Around

Chefs like Rainbeau Ridge cheeses for the fresh, tangy flavor they add to a menu; check out highlights from three New York State restaurants:

BLUE HILL CAFÉ

Chef Dan Barber in Poncatic Hills tops an open-face sandwich of roasted root vegetables and braised winter greens with ChevreLait (bluehillfarm.com).

GRAMERCY TAVERN

MontVivant is a fixture on the cheese menu at this respected NYC restaurant. Chef Michael Anthony likes it paired with his Spinach Salad with Charred Parsnips (gramercytavern.com).

IRON HORSE GRILL

Pleasantville's Chef Phil McGrath serves a baked ChevreLog slice rolled in almonds on a winter salad of endive and frisée (ironhorsegrill.com).

■ Rainbeau Ridge goat cheeses are available April 1–December 1. Visit rainbeauridge.com for ordering information.

crust lends additional zing. "Choose the freshest, creamiest goat cheese you can find for baking, preferably within 10 days to two weeks of production," Lisa says.

Nicki takes over to guide us in making Beggar's Purses—small phyllo packets filled with goat cheese—which will top off a hearty Wild Mushroom Soup. The soup is a woodsy combination of shiitake, oyster, cremini, and dried porcini mushrooms served in their own broth. Break the purse open, and swirls of goat cheese add extra creaminess.

For the main course, classic risotto gets a makeover with chicken, dried

fruits, chunks of pear, white wine, and, of course, goat cheese. As our group sits down to enjoy the meal, we've started to feel like family. "A class here is a great way to start the day," says Tom Cohn. His wife, Lisa Cohn, agrees. "It's something we like to do together. There are great chefs here and lots of new ideas."

Rainbeau Ridge inspires students to embrace sustainability a step at a time. "Do something that gives a meaningful tie to food, whether starting an herb garden or supporting local growers," Lisa says. "It's not just about feeding our families, but connecting them to their meals." 🍷

