Welcome to the Grilled Cheese Recipe Showdown® Hall of Fame, brought to you by Wisconsin Cheese and the dairy farm families of Wisconsin. Here is where you’ll find the first inductees and their delicious creations that earned them the title of champion over the past six years. So start flipping through, take some notes and see how Wisconsin Cheese makes a grilled cheese sensational.

GrilledCheeseAcademy.com
Everyone loves a good comeback story. Especially when the end result is an extremely tasty sandwich. That’s exactly the case with the Mississippi Comeback — a delicious grilled cheese featuring the southern signature comeback sauce. Along with the sauce, this sandwich has fried okra, a corn and bacon confetti and sweet roasted tomatoes, all held together with Wisconsin fontina and cheddar cheese.

**INGREDIENTS**

**FOR COMEBACK SAUCE:**
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper

**FOR BACON AND CORN CONFEITTI:**
- 2 medium ears corn, shucked and cleaned
- Vegetable oil (for brushing corn)
- 2 slices thick-cut bacon, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/4 onion, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

**FOR ROASTED TOMATOES:**
- 1 pint grape tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

**FOR FRIED OKRA:**
- 2 cups fresh or frozen okra, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1/4 cup cornmeal
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Vegetable oil for frying

**FOR SANDWICH ASSEMBLY:**
- 4 large slices sour dough bread, cut at least 1-inch thick
- 4 slices (1 ounce each) Wisconsin Fontina cheese
- 4 slices (1 ounce each) Wisconsin Cheddar cheese

**COOKING DIRECTIONS**

For comeback sauce: Whisk all sauce ingredients in medium bowl; refrigerate until needed.

For bacon and corn confetti: Heat grill pan to high. Brush corn with oil and cook until golden brown with grill marks, rotating on all sides; set aside to cool. When cool, cut corn off cobs and set aside. Meanwhile, cook bacon in large cast iron skillet over medium-high heat until done. Add red and green bell peppers and onion and cook until transparent and soft, 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in corn and fresh basil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

For roasted tomatoes: Heat oven to 400°F. Slice tomatoes in half lengthwise. Place on baking sheet and drizzle with vegetable oil. Toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper and roast in oven for 20 minutes. Skins will appear wrinkled when done. Set aside.

For fried okra: Place okra in medium bowl and add buttermilk; gently stir to coat. In another bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, garlic and onion powder and salt. Drain okra slices and add to flour mixture, tossing to coat. Pour oil to a depth of about 1/4 inch into large cast iron skillet and heat over medium-high heat until hot. Add okra and fry until crispy and golden, about 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Remove to paper towel-lined plate to drain. Cook okra in batches, being careful not to overcrowd pan and adding extra oil as needed.

For sandwich assembly: Carefully pinch out the soft bread in the center of each slice to about 1/2-inch deep, leaving the sides and bottom intact, creating a well. (This will help the filling ingredients to stay inside the sandwich.)

Heat a cast iron griddle or large skillet over medium-low heat. Spread the flat side of each piece of bread liberally with the sauce, then place 2 slices on the hot griddle sauce side down. Spread more sauce in the well of each slice, then place 2 slices of fontina on one bread slice and 2 slices of cheddar on the other bread slice, gently pushing cheese into the well. Add 1/3 to 1/2 of the fried okra on top of the cheddar cheese (whatever will fit), and add 1/3 to 1/2 of the tomatoes and 1/3 to 1/2 of the corn to the other side, gently pressing down into the bread. Carefully place the okra slice on top of the other slice, okra side in. (If pieces fall out, just push them back in.) Cook for about 3-4 minutes, or until golden brown and melted over low-medium heat. Repeat with remaining sandwich.

Cut each sandwich in half to serve. Pile any remaining vegetables around the sandwich for presentation. Serve with extra sauce for dipping.

Recipe Tips: Cook the sandwich slowly on low-medium heat, so the inside gets melted and hot before the outside gets too brown.

Make sure the cheese is at room temperature for faster melting. Store sauce in the fridge, but let stand at room temperature for about 10-15 minutes to take the chill off.

Pinching out part of the bread creates a well so that the ingredients don’t fall out of the sandwich as easy.
The ALL-AMERICAN

Created by GRACE GUTIERREZ of Longmont, CO

Celebrate the diversity of America with the unexpectedly tantalizing combo of apple pie and churro flavors. Both sugary and savory, the All-American unites Wisconsin aged cheddar and mascarpone, churro-battered challah bread and homemade apple pie filling.

COOKING DIRECTIONS

Slice challah into 8 1/2-inch-thick slices. Set aside.

FOR FILLING:
Peel and core apple; cut into thin slices and place in small saucepan. Add sugar, cinnamon and lemon juice; bring to boil, stirring constantly. When apples start to become transparent, remove from heat and set aside for about 10 minutes.

FOR BATTER:
In wide medium bowl, whisk flour and milk until no clumps remain. Add sugar, vanilla and eggs; whisk until ingredients are fully incorporated. Set aside.

TO FINISH:
Mix sugar, cinnamon and cocoa powder for coating; spread on large flat plate; set aside.

Place mascarpone in piping bag or resealable plastic bag. Snip 1 corner if using bag. Set aside.

Heat butter in large skillet over medium-low heat. Dip bread slices, one by one, in batter on both sides. Place in skillet; cook until first side is browned, flip to brown second side. Repeat with all slices. When done cooking, place them on flat surface, such as a baking sheet. Pipe mascarpone in a 1/2-inch-thick layer over entire surface on half the slices. Top with thin layer of reserved apple filling and 2 slices aged cheddar. Top with remaining bread slices to close sandwich. Return sandwiches to hot skillet; cook, flipping twice to melt the cheeses. Bread should be crispy, a good dark brown color. Remove from skillet; place directly into reserved cinnamon-sugar-coating mix on plate. Flip to coat both sides with the mixture. Halve sandwiches and serve immediately.

INGREDIENTS

1 challah bread loaf

FOR APPLE FILLING:
1 large Fuji or Gala apple
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons lemon juice

FOR CHURRO BATTER:
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
3/4 cup milk
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 eggs

TO FINISH:
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon cocoa powder
3 tablespoons butter
8 ounces Wisconsin mascarpone cheese
8 slices (1 ounce each) Wisconsin aged cheddar cheese
**COOKING DIRECTIONS**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon spicy mustard
- 2 carrots, shredded
- 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

**FOR SRIRACHA BARBEQUE SAUCE:**
- 4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 3/4 cup ketchup
- 3 heaping tablespoons Sriracha sauce
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 cup light beer

**FOR CHICKEN:**
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- Salt and pepper to taste

**FOR GORGONZOLA FONDUE:**
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons dry vermouth
- 3/4 cup half and half
- 1 cup (6 ounces) Wisconsin gorgonzola cheese, crumbled

**FOR ASSEMBLY:**
- 4 slices freshly made sourdough bread
- 1 cup (4 ounces) Wisconsin mozzarella cheese, shredded

**Combine** mayonnaise and mustard; set aside. Toss carrots and celery with lemon juice in small bowl; set aside.

**For Sriracha barbeque sauce:** Combine brown sugar, ketchup, Sriracha, soy sauce, salt, garlic powder and honey in saucepan; bring to a boil. Add beer, mix well and lower to simmer for approximately 15 minutes, or until sauce thickens.

**For chicken:** Preheat oven to 425°F. Coat chicken with 1 tablespoon olive oil; season liberally with salt and pepper. In oven-safe skillet, heat remaining tablespoon olive oil and brown chicken on both sides, approximately 5 minutes. Pour sriracha barbeque sauce into skillet; bake until internal temperature of chicken reaches 160°F, approximately 15 minutes. Remove chicken from oven, transfer to plate and cool. Shred chicken with your hands or 2 forks; transfer to baking dish; arrange in single layer. Preheat broiler to 500°F. Drizzle sauce from skillet over chicken and return to oven until caramelized and crusty, approximately 4 minutes.

**For fondue:** Melt 3 tablespoons butter in saucepan over medium-low heat. Add minced garlic and sauté 1 minute; do not allow garlic to brown too much. Stir in flour and cook, about 1 minute. Stir in the vermouth. Add half and half, continuing to stir until sauce begins to thicken. Bring sauce to boil; add salt and pepper to taste. Reduce heat and add gorgonzola cheese a little at a time, stirring until completely melted.

**For assembly:** Melt 1 tablespoon butter in nonstick oven-safe skillet over medium-low heat. Spread mayonnaise-mustard mixture evenly over one side of each bread slice. Place slices, mayonnaise-side-up, in skillet. When bread is slightly golden, flip and grill second side until medium brown and crusty. Remove skillet from heat and place one fourth of mozzarella on each mayonnaise-coated side of slices. Broil for 1 minute.

Remove from oven; spread half the chicken over 1 of the slices. Drizzle with generous amount of gorgonzola fondue. Add a heaping pile of the carrot-celery mixture and top with bread slice, cheese-side-down. Repeat construction with second sandwich. Halve sandwiches for serving.

**The SPORTS BAR**

Watch the game with The Sports Bar. Sriracha barbecue chicken is smothered in Wisconsin gorgonzola fondue with celery and carrots. Wisconsin mozzarella ties the sandwich together between two perfectly crunchy slices of pan-fried bread.

Created by **STEFANIE ABI-RACHED AND CHRIS SCHALDENBRAND** of Santa Ana, Ca

*Nominated for 2015 Grilled Cheese Academy Champion*
**COOKING DIRECTIONS**

In medium-sized skillet, melt butter and brown sugar over medium heat. Add onions and salt; cook until oftened, about 5 minutes. Add beer and reduce heat to medium low. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Remove lid and continue cooking at light simmer until liquid is thickened and mixture is medium to dark golden brown and onions caramelize, about 40 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Butterfly brats lengthwise about 3/4 of the way through and split open so that the brat remains in one piece. In skillet over medium heat, sear brats until each side is golden brown. Set aside.

Butter outside of each slice of bread. Divide mustard and spread on the inside of 4 bread slices. On inside of remaining 4 slices, divide and add limburger. On top of limburger, layer 1/4 of the caramelized onions, a brat and 1 baby swiss cheese slice; top each sandwich with remaining pieces of bread, mustard-side-down.

Brown sandwiches on preheated griddle pan or in skillet over medium-low heat until each side is golden brown and cheese is melted, flipping once. Once browned, let sandwiches rest for about 1 minute. Slice in half before serving.
INGREDIENTS

- 4-6 tablespoons (1/2 to 3/4 stick) butter, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon chili paste
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces) Wisconsin mascarpone cheese, softened
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts)
- 1/4 cup tomatoes, small dice
- 4 slices country-style white bread
- 4 thin slices Wisconsin provolone cheese
- 1/2 cup arugula
- 1 cup cooked Maine lobster, coarsely copped

Reminiscent of buttery Maine lobster rolls, this grilled cheese sandwich gets its rich flavor from creamy Wisconsin mascarpone and delicious Wisconsin provolone. Watch out for the touch of unexpected “summery” heat from the chili-infused butter.

COOKING DIRECTIONS

In small bowl stir together butter and chili paste. Set aside. In medium bowl stir together Wisconsin mascarpone cheese, scallions and tomatoes. Spread mascarpone mixture over each bread slice, evenly dividing.

Top mascarpone on 2 slices with 2 provolone slices followed by arugula, evenly dividing. Arrange lobster in even layer over arugula, then top with remaining provolone slices followed by remaining bread slices, mascarpone-side-down.

In large nonstick skillet, melt 2-3 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Place sandwiches in skillet and spread remaining butter over sandwich tops. Cook sandwiches until bottom bread is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Using a spatula, carefully flip sandwiches, pressing down gently. Continue cooking additional 3 minutes, or until both sides are golden brown and filling is warm and melted.
INGREDIENTS
- 1/2 cup arugula
- 1/2 cup spinach
- 4 slices traditional white bread
- 4-6 tablespoons butter, softened
- Cooking spray to coat skillet
- 20-24 fresh blackberries, divided
- 2 slices Wisconsin provolone cheese, cut to fit bread
- 2 slices Wisconsin gouda cheese, cut to fit bread
- 6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and drained

COOKING DIRECTIONS
Mix arugula and spinach in small bowl; set aside. Trim crust from 3 sides of the bread slices, leaving curved top crust attached. Butter bread slices on both sides. Heavily coat skillet, preferably cast iron, with cooking spray and then heat.

Place 2 slices of bread, buttered-side down, in skillet (there should be slight sizzle) and place 5-6 blackberries in center area of each bread slice. Top berries with a slice of provolone. Add another handful of berries and top with gouda for the second layer. Place 3 strips of bacon on each sandwich and place bread slice on top, buttered-side up. Using a spatula, press firmly to meld and compact sandwich; grill 2-3 minutes until bottom is browned. Flip and grill another 2 minutes or until cheese is melting.

Remove sandwiches to plate. Carefully pull back top slice and spread arugula and spinach mixture over. Replace top, pressing down, and then flip sandwich so greens are on the bottom.

This magical concoction features fresh blackberries, peppery greens, crispy fried bacon, and lusciously molten Wisconsin provolone and gouda.
**Wisconsin Aged Cheddar**

**Featured on:** THE MISSISSIPPI COMEBACK

**DESCRIPTION**
Wisconsin leads the nation in producing this captivating cheese. Profoundly aromatic and complex, cheddar can be aged up to ten years. Aging increases sharpness and allows different flavors and textures to develop. Cheddar's natural color is creamy white, but it is often turned bright orange with the addition of annatto—a tasteless, odorless vegetable coloring.

**FLAVOR**
Rich, nutty and smooth when young, it becomes increasingly sharp, complex and crumbly with age.

**GOES WELL WITH**
Crackers, sausages, apples, pears, dried fruits & nuts.

**PAIRS WITH**
Brandy, Champagne, Ciders & Fruit Beers, Madeira, Merlot, Pale Ale, Pinot Gris, Port, Porter, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Scotch and Syrah.

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**Wisconsin Baby Swiss**

**Featured on:** THE LIMBURGER LEAP

**DESCRIPTION**
Why is it called baby swiss? For starters, it’s not aged as long as traditional swiss and contains smaller holes or eyes (as cheesemakers like to refer to them). What’s more, it’s usually produced in smaller sizes. In Wisconsin, cheesemakers traditionally produce baby swiss using whole milk. This gives the cheese a creamier texture and more buttery flavor, making it ideal for melting.

**FLAVOR**
Mild, buttery, creamy, and slightly sweet. Simply put, it’s addictive.

**GOES WELL WITH**
Apples, pears, grapes, strawberries, ham, corned beef, fruity white wine, and aged red wine.

**PAIRS WITH**
Chardonnay, Lager, Stout, Weiss Beer, and White Zinfandel.

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**Wisconsin Fontina**

**Featured on:** THE MISSISSIPPI COMEBACK

**DESCRIPTION**
Fontina is considered to be one of the most versatile cheeses in the world. While it originated in Italy, fontina is produced in different variations throughout the world. In Wisconsin, cheesemakers produce Italian, Swedish, and Danish styles of this cheese. Fontina is commonly melted into food, but also deserves a place on either your dessert or dinner tray.

**FLAVOR**
Danish and Swedish styles are slightly tart and nutty, with light, earthy flavors. Italian styles taste mild, earthy, and buttery.

**GOES WELL WITH**
Crusty bread, prosciutto, Genoa salami, peaches, melons, figs, and nectarines.

**PAIRS WITH**
Bock and Pinot Noir.
**Wisconsin Limburger**

**Description**
One of the world’s most famously pungent cheeses, this bold Belgian cheese does nothing but intensify with age. Limburger was created to complement the highly flavored game and meats commonly eaten in Belgium and Germany. Today, a single cheese plant in Monroe, Wisconsin, produces all the surface-ripened limburger made in the United States.

**Flavor**
Earthy and pungent. Intensity increases with age.

**Goes Well With**
Pumpernickel and other dark or whole-grain breads, pretzels, pickled vegetables, and mustard.

**Pairs With**
Bock, Lager, and Porter.

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**Wisconsin Gouda**

**Description**
Wisconsin cheesemakers proudly carry on the tradition of making fine gouda, a cheese first produced more than 800 years ago in Holland. Both the age and flavor of gouda can be determined by the color of the wax casing: red wax suggests mild, yellow or clear wax suggests aged or flavored, and black or brown wax suggests smoked. Wisconsin produces gouda in many varieties: plain, caraway, smoked, reduced fat and endless—a version that is easier to slice.

**Flavor**
Light, buttery and nutty.

**Goes Well With**
Crackers, apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries and nuts.

**Pairs With**
Beaujolais, Bock, Brandy, Brown Ale, Champagne, Chardonnay, Lager, Pale Ale, Pinot Gris, Porter, Riesling, Scotch and Stout.

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**Wisconsin Gorgonzola**

**Description**
An ancient cheese, gorgonzola has been in production since 879 A.D. Gorgonzola is a creamy ivory color, with penetrating greenish-blue streaks throughout. This cheese is typically produced in flatter wheels than traditional blue cheeses. Wisconsin gorgonzolas are known for their exceptional creaminess.

**Flavor**
An earthy flavor that is slightly sharp.

**Goes Well With**
Crackers, pears, apricots, figs, honey, walnuts and cashews.

**Pairs With**
Merlot, Pinot Noir, Port, Porter, Riesling, Stout and Zinfandel.
Wisconsin MASCARPONE

DESCRIPTION
Smooth and thick, soft and creamy, mascarpone is a fresh cheese meant to be eaten soon after it’s produced. However, Wisconsin mascarpone enjoys a longer shelf life than imported varieties. Originating in the Lombardy region of Italy, it was traditionally made only during the fall and winter months as a dessert cheese. In Wisconsin, mascarpone is available year-round, and has many applications.

FLAVOR
Rich, buttery, and slightly sweet. Yes, it’s hard to resist.

GOES WELL WITH
Berries, fresh figs, shortbread, ladyfingers, and sweet wheat crackers.

PAIRS WITH
Champagne, Ciders & Fruit Beers, Pinot Gris, Port, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Stout.

Wisconsin MOZZARELLA

DESCRIPTION
Every year, Wisconsin cheesemakers produce more than 850 million pounds of mozzarella, a cheese that ranks second only to cheddar in popularity in the United States. An Italian favorite, this cheese gained popularity in America following World War II, as vets returned home with a craving for the delicious pizzas they ate while overseas. Mozzarella has a lower moisture content than fresh mozzarella, giving it a much longer shelf life.

FLAVOR
Mild, delicate and milky.

GOES WELL WITH
Tomatoes, cured meats, pesto, black olives and roasted red peppers.

PAIRS WITH
Beaujolais, Chardonnay and Pilsner.

Wisconsin PROVOLONE

DESCRIPTION
A cheese closely related to mozzarella, provolone is distinguishable by its fuller flavors, achieved through the use of more cultures. Early cheesemakers originally used ropes to hang and cure provolone, then reused the ropes to transport the cheese by horseback. Provolone comes in both smoked and unsmoked varieties.

FLAVOR
Slightly tart when young, growing sharper with age.

GOES WELL WITH
Crackers, cured meats, tomatoes, pears, grapes, figs, nuts and olives.

PAIRS WITH
Chianti, Lager, Pale Ale, Port, Porter, Stout and Syrah.
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