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## Appenzeller cheese

The history of Appenzeller cheese is very old. Tax records stretching as far back as the 14th century discuss the cheese, as well as its producers. Modern Appenzeller cheese is manufactured by 75 highly secretive dairies, all of which use slightly different production techniques. Like other cheeses, Appenzeller starts with a heating process to separate curds from whey. The curds are pressed in large molds to create wheels of cheese, which are soaked in a brine solution before being aged and sold.

What makes Appenzeller cheese highly unique is the brine solution, which includes a mixture of herbs and spices. These saturate the cheese, lending it a distinct and unusual flavor. In addition, the cheese is regularly washed in wine or cider while it cures, adding a fruitiness to the cheese as well. Three versions are available: classic, surchoix, and extra. Classic is lightly aged, with a milder flavor, while extra is the strongest, with an intense flavor and pungent aroma.



Appenzeller is traditionally made with whole milk from cows which have grazed in the same fields used to make the herbal brine for the cheese. Many consumers believe that the best Appenzeller comes from summer milk, which comes from cows eating a minimum of hay, and tends to be high in fat. In appearance, Appenzeller cheese has an even straw colored body, interspersed with small holes which can get as large as peas. The rind is somewhat darker, and should be stamped with information about the dairy from which the cheese came.

*from the internet*

## Appenzeller Witz



De Jock säät zom Bisch:

«Du, i glob i bi alergisch uf Leder.» –

«Oms tuusigs Gottswile werom?»

frooged de Bisch.

Do säät de Jock: «Wo n i hüte Moge im Bett inne verwached bi, ha n i d Schue no aakha, ond de Chopf hets me nooch vesprengt.»

## The Fäensee

The Fäensee is the smallest of the three mountain lakes in Appenzell Innerrhoden. It is 1 km long, but only 300 m wide at its widest place. The water runs off subterraneously, into the Rheintal. The Fäensee is part of the Fälenalp, in a narrow valley with steep mountains on both sides, the Widderalpstöcke and the Hundstein to the North, the Altmann to the West and the Saxerfirst to the East. The Fäensee can be reached on foot in two hours from Brülisau.

In old times the alp was called Glücksalp. It was a rich alp, offering good pasture, where the cows had a good life and produced good, fat milk, which was turned into many rounds of good cheese. All went well for many years, and the farmers deemed themselves fortunate to send their cows to Glücksalp summer after summer.



The Fäensee

But one year they had to choose a new Senn (cowherd) to look after the Glücksalp. He turned out to be a hard man. He mistreated the Hütebueb (the boy who had to help him). The Senn drank cream, but didn't even allow the Bueb to drink milk, and he only gave the boy stale, mouldy crusts of bread, although the boy had to do all the hard work. He swore at the boy and at the cows and treated them cruelly. When other cowherds tried to admonish the Senn to change his ways, he only laughed at them and became even more vicious. One day, after he had given the boy a bad hiding, he found the boy crying and praying to God. He broke out into blasphemous laughter and gave the boy another hiding, even worse than the first one.

The very evening a thunderstorm came up. Rain and hail hit the alp, and a massive rock avalanche buried half the alp and killed half the herd. The cowherd swore and cursed God – till a second avalanche thundered down, killing the rest of the herd and the Senn. The boy escaped and brought the bad news to Brülisau, and ever since then the alp is called Fälenalp, and the lake is the Fäensee. *tb*