



CERTIFIED CHEESE PROFESSIONAL® (CCP) EXAM

Study Resource Guide

2026 EXAM CYCLE

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Study Resource Guide Disclaimer

This guide was put together to assist exam candidates in their journey towards preparing to take the certification exam.

These materials are intended solely as a study aid and should not be interpreted as a guaranteed representation of the cheeses, product attributes, or subject matter that may appear on the exam. Candidates are encouraged to use this guide as a general reference while maintaining a broad understanding of cheese styles, production methods, sensory evaluation, food safety, business practices, and industry terminology as outlined on the exam blueprint.

Cheese availability may change due to product discontinuations, seasonal production cycles, or market fluctuations, including during the exam period. As a result, specific cheeses referenced in these study materials may not reflect the exact products presented or discussed in the certification exam.

How to Use This Guide

- In addition to cheeses and cheese products as defined in **21 CFR Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Part 133**, test takers should expect that exam questions about the specific cheeses will incorporate those listed in this guide.
- Take a broad but shallow approach to studying. Focus on the big-picture elements found in the Cheese Profile Template—milk type, basic make style, rind, texture, general sensory notes, simple pairing logic, protected status, and overall production context.
- Deep technical detail is not likely to be needed and instead, aim to recognize patterns, not memorize specifics. The goal is application and understanding, not mastery.
- Due to seasonality and market changes, knowing substitutes or closely related products and styles will help-emphasize style families and methods along with specific names.

Cheese Profile Template

This guide can help as a template to help organize study guides or notes.

Cheese Name

Country/Region

Milk Type: Cow / Goat / Sheep / Water Buffalo / Mixed

Milk Treatment: Raw / Thermized / Pasteurized

Texture: Fresh / Soft-Ripened / Semi-Soft / Semi-Firm / Hard / Extra-Hard

Rind: Bloomy / Washed / Natural / Brined / Waxed / Clothbound / Leaf-Wrapped / None

Make Style/Key Technique: Cooked/ Pressed /Washed Curd/ Lactic set/etc.

Existing PDO/PGI designation (with related breed, specification), if applicable

Aging

Signature Aromas & Flavors

Service & Pairing Notes

Storage & Handling

Look-alikes/subs/like styles

Cheeses To Know (A-Z)

- Abondance
- Appenzeller
- Barely Buzzed
- Beaufort
- Bleu d'Auvergne
- Bleu des Causses
- Bonne Bouche
- Brie de Meaux
- Cabot Clothbound Cheddar
- Cabrales
- Caerphilly
- Camembert de Normandie
- Campo de Montalban
- Casatica
- Cashel Blue
- Chabichou
- Cheddar - Somerset
- Cheshire
- Comte
- Cornish Yarg
- Cotija
- Crottin de Chavignol
- Cumberland
- Dunbarton Blue
- Durrus
- Edam
- Emmentaler
- Epoisses
- Feta PDO
- Fiore Sardo
- Flagship Reserve
- Fontina Val d'Aosta
- Fourme d'Ambert
- Garrotxa
- Gorgonzola Dolce
- Gorgonzola Piccante
- Grana Padano
- Grand Cru Surchoix
- Grayson
- Green Hill
- Gruyere
- Gubbeen
- Halloumi
- Harbison
- Hooligan
- Hornbacher
- Ibores
- Idiazabal
- Kunik
- La Tur
- Lancashire
- Langres
- Mahon
- Manchego
- Marieke Gouda
- Mimolette
- Monte Enebro
- Morbier
- Mothais-sur-Feuille
- Mozzarella di Bufala
- Mt Tam
- Munster
- Neufchatel
- Oma
- Ossau-Iraty
- Parmigiano Reggiano
- Pecorino Romano
- Pleasant Ridge Reserve
- Point Reyes Original Blue
- Pont-l'Eveque
- Prairie Tomme
- Provolone
- Queso Blanco
- Queso Oaxaca
- Queso Panela
- Raclette
- Ragusano
- Reblochon
- Red Hawk
- Red Leicester
- Rogue River Blue
- Roncal
- Roquefort
- Saint Nectaire
- Sainte-Maure de Touraine
- Salers
- Sbrinz
- Serra da Estrela
- Shropshire
- Soumaintrain
- St. Malachi
- Stilton
- Taleggio
- Tarentaise
- Tete de Moine
- Tomme de Savoie
- Torta del Casar
- Vacherin Mont D'Or
- Valdeon
- Valencay
- Verano
- Wabash Cannonball
- Wensleydale
- Winnimere
- Withersbrook Blue

Study Resources

This reference list is provided to help with exam preparation. While not comprehensive, it represents the primary sources used by item writers when developing exam questions, as well as the materials commonly relied upon by professionals across the cheese industry. These resources should be used broadly as part of a study approach.

Books

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| Mastering Artisan Cheesemaking Caldwell, Gianacis ISBN: 9780865718180 | The Oxford Companion to Cheese Oxford University Press ISBN: 9780199330881 |
| Cheese And Microbes Donnelly, Catherine ISBN: 9781555815868 | Farmstead and Artisan Cheeses: A Guide to Building a Business Reed, Barbara ISBN: 9781601076922 |
| Cheese & Wine: A Guide to Selecting, Pairing, and Enjoying Fletcher, Janet ISBN: 9780811857437 | Atlas of American Artisan Cheese Roberts, Jeffrey ISBN: 9781933392349 |
| Encyclopédie des Fromages Grund Publishers ISBN: 9782700020274 | The New Rules of Cheese: A Freewheeling and Informative Guide Saxelby, Anne ISBN: 9781984857897 |
| American Farmstead Cheese Kindstedt, Paul ISBN: 9781931498777 | The Book of Cheese: The Essential Guide to Discovering Cheeses You'll Love Thorpe, Liz ISBN: 9781250063458 |
| Cheese and Fermented Milk Foods Kosikowski & Mistry ISBN: 9780960740451 | The Science of Cheese Tunick, Michael H ISBN: 9780199922307 |
| Mastering Cheese: Lessons for Connoisseurship from a Maître Fromager McCalman, Max ISBN: 9780307406484 | Handbook of Milk of Non-Bovine Animals Wiley-Blackwell ISBN: 9781119110279 |
| Cheese Problems Solved McSweeney, P.L.H. ISBN: 9781845690601 | One Cheese to Rule Them All: In Search of the World's 100 Best Cheeses McGuigan, P. and Yescas, C. ISBN: 9781761501258 |

Regulations

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| Code of Federal Regulations, Food for Human Consumption, Part 117 Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food Code of Federal Regulations, United States |
| FDA Food Code 2022 Food and Drug Administration , United States |
| 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1, subpart S Traceability Rule Food and Drug Administration, United States |
| 21 Code of Federal Regulations Chapter 1 Subchapter B Part 133 https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-133 |
| Grade A Pasteurized Milk Ordinance https://www.fda.gov/media/140394/download |
| Food Code Section 3-501.17 Ready-to-Eat, Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food, Date Marking |

Websites

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| Milk! Brickley, Zoe https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GnUkoHvDAQ |
| Cheese State University Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin https://www.cheesestateuniversity.com/ |
| Cheese Science Toolkit Polowsky, Pat https://www.cheesescience.org/ |
| Culture Magazine: Cheese 101 https://culturecheesemag.com/cheese-101/ |
| ACS CCP Exam Blueprint Blueprint |
| Academy of Cheese https://academyofcheese.org/ |

Sample Questions ACS CCP Exam

Domain 1: Health, Regulations, Food Safety

The Food Safety Modernization Act requires strategies to protect food against intentional adulteration including the development and implementation of a:

- A. Food Safety Plan.
- B. Hazard Analysis Plan.
- C. Food Defense Plan.
- D. Environmental Monitoring Plan.

Domain 2: Operations

A cheese manufacturer is exempt from creating an approved food safety plan if it:

- A. only produces pasteurized cheese.
- B. has a HACCP plan in place.
- C. qualifies as a very small business.
- D. is a farmstead business.

Domain 3: Cheese History, Definitions, Categorizations

What was the first cheese to receive legal designation and protection, launching the French AOC system?

- A. Cantal
- B. Roquefort
- C. Beaufort
- D. Camembert de Normandie

Domain 4: Milk

Why does a cheesemaker monitor the somatic cell count of their raw milk?

- A. It is an indication of the effectiveness of farm sanitation programs.
- B. It is a way to evaluate the health of the animals in the dairy herd.
- C. It is an indication that milk has been mishandled.in transport.
- D. It eliminates the need to perform a Standard Plate Count.

Domain 5: Cheesemaking

The cultures that produce characteristic flavor and eyes in Swiss cheese consist of what bacteria?

- A. *Streptococcus thermophilus*
- B. *Brevibacterium linens*
- C. *Propionibacterium freudenreichii*
- D. *Lactococcus lactis*

Domain 6: Ripening

When is a morge typically applied to a cheese?

- A. During affinage
- B. Just prior to packaging
- C. During the scald
- D. When coagulum is cut

Domain 7: Assessment and Evaluation

The flavor defect of dairy products related to ultraviolet light exposure is:

- A. syneresis
- B. aeration
- C. flocculation
- D. oxidation

Domain 8: Selling and Transporting

The US Food and Drug Administration uses the Grade A Pasteurized Milk Ordinance as the standard to regulate the sale of all _____ in the United States.

- A. pasteurized dairy products
- B. Grade A dairy products
- C. fluid dairy products
- D. dairy products that cross state lines

Domain 9: Inventory Management

When a dedicated storage area is not available, foods containing allergens should be stored:

- A. Above non-allergen containing foods.
- B. Directly adjacent to non-allergen foods.
- C. Behind non-allergen foods.
- D. Below non-allergen containing foods.

Domain 10: Service

A cheese monger is building a southern Italian cheese display. Which cheeses would best match the terroir of southern Italy?

- A. Fiore Sardo, Pecorino Romano, Caciocavallo
- B. Fiore Sardo, Scamorza, Taleggio
- C. Caciocavallo, Gorgonzola Dolce, Appenzeller
- D. Fiore Sardo, Pecorino Romano, Fontina Val d' Aosta

Domain 11: Business Principals, Practices

How is a Keystone Price determined?

- A. Wholesale cost $\times 2$ = retail price
- B. Wholesale cost $\times 1.5$ = retail price
- C. Wholesale cost + 50% markup = retail price
- D. Wholesale cost + 100% gross margin = retail price

Sample Math Question

A shop has packaged 350 six-ounce wedges of domestic Gouda at a total cost of \$1,875.00. What should they mark the price per piece if they want a 50% mark-up?

- A. \$5.36 / piece
- B. \$8.36 / piece
- C. \$8.04 /piece
- D. \$11.72 / piece

Sample Question Answer Key

Domain 1: C

Domain 2: C

Domain 3: B

Domain 4: B

Domain 5: C

Domain 6: A

Domain 7: D

Domain 8: D

Domain 9: D

Domain 10: A

Domain 11: A

Sample Math Question: C

Rationale:

$$\text{Cost } \$1875 / 350 = \$5.36 / \text{piece}$$

50% mark-up:

$$\$5.36 / \text{piece} \times 1.5 = \$8.04$$