

Gailtaler Almkäse g.U.

Traditional craftsmanship with protected origin.



Every year, the cheesemakers of the Gail Valley head up to the alpine pastures to continue a centuries-old tradition. Our daily life is shaped by diligence and mindfulness – qualities that are indispensable in alpine cheesemaking. We are aware that with our craft we are not only producing cheese, but also preserving the alpine pastures and creating a sustainable, regional product.

Particular attention must be given to the herd: cows from different farmers come together here and must quickly form a harmonious community. This can only succeed with great sensitivity. We need to empathize with the animals, recognize their needs, and respond with calmness and experience. Handling both milk and animals requires the same delicate touch that is later needed in the production of Gailtaler Almkäse g.U.

Our work on the alpine pastures is a new challenge every year – shaped by nature, weather, and the characteristics of the animals. Yet it is precisely this diversity that makes it so valuable. With each season, not only does our knowledge grow, but also our connection to the landscape, the animals, and our product. This is how cheese specialties are created that carry within them the taste of the alpine pastures and the work of many hands.

Gailtaler Almkäse g.U. is one of Austria's oldest alpine cheeses and is produced exclusively during the alpine season, lasting around 90 to 100 days in the summer months, directly on the mountain pastures. The basis is the milk from cows belonging to small-scale farms in the valley. On the herb-rich alpine meadows, the diversity of plants creates high-quality raw milk, which forms the foundation for the cheese's distinctive flavor.

The dairy cows are milked twice a day. In the evening, the fresh raw milk is stored in vats at room temperature, allowing the natural bacterial flora to develop – crucial for the flavor profile. The next morning, the cream that has risen is skimmed and made into alpine butter. The remaining milk is combined with the fresh morning milk in a copper kettle, where it is heated over a fire to about 32°C. Additional lactic acid bacteria are added to support the natural ripening process. Natural rennet is then stirred in. After coagulation, the curd is cut with a cheese harp into wheat grain-sized pieces, stirred, and heated until the desired firmness is reached. It is then lifted from the kettle with a cheesecloth and placed into molds. After pressing, the wheels undergo a two- to three-day salt bath, which contributes to the formation of the typical natural rind.

In the cheese cellar, Gailtaler Almkäse continues to mature under daily care and observation. Characteristic are its dry, smooth, golden-yellow natural rind and the absence of surface ripening. After just two months, the cheese is ready to enjoy and presents itself as young and mild; with longer aging it develops spiciness and complexity.

The taste of Gailtaler Almkäse varies from pasture to pasture. Factors such as altitude, herb composition, weather conditions, and the cheesemaker's skill shape its aroma. At the end of the alpine summer, only young cheese is available, while in winter and spring mainly matured wheels are offered. Thus, Gailtaler Almkäse PDO reflects not only traditional craftsmanship but also the rhythm of nature and the cultural landscape of farming.

For inquiries, please contact the chairwoman of the association directly:



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