



# The 2024 Maine Cheese Awards



Dear Maine Cheesemaker,

The Maine Cheese Guild is thrilled to announce **the 4th annual Maine Cheese Awards** celebrating the many talents of our Maine cheese making community. This year, the event is hosted and conducted by Maine Tasting Center. This annual event is open to all licensed Maine cheesemakers with no limitations or exclusions. Winners will be announced on the Main Stage at the Maine Cheese Festival. Participants and winners will be featured in our post event media including social media and on the Maine Cheese Guild website. This year, we have a new category: *The People's Choice award*, which will be a separate event judged by members of the general public, rather than the slate of (cheese knowledgeable) professionals who will be judging the main event.

## Event Instructions and Rules

- All participating producers must be licensed by the State of Maine.
- All cheese entries must be made and processed within the state of Maine using Maine milk.
- Cheesemakers may submit **up to a total of 8 cheeses**.
- There are **9 categories** in the competition this year. The list is attached to the email.
- The People's Choice judging is **optional**. It is separate from the main competition and is limited to one cheese per cheesemaker.
- Each entry should be individually wrapped and labeled with the cheese name, category of entry and milk type.

## Judging

- Judges are recruited from a variety of Maine restaurants, retailers, media outlets and other sources with a connection to, and knowledge of, Maine cheese.
- All cheeses are judged blindly.
- There are **two rounds of judging**. The first round considers all entries by category and ultimately results in approximately 5 semi-finalists in each category (subject to change depending on the total number of entries in a category). The second round is the final round and determines the award winners.

- In each category, there will be a first, second, and third place prize awarded.
- There will also be one Best in Show award for the highest scoring cheese across all categories.
- There will be *a separate People's Choice award* judged by approximately 40-60 members of the cheese-eating public who are attending a separate event at Maine Tasting Center on the same day.

## Judging Criteria

All cheeses will be judged based on 4 criteria:

- Presentation (first impressions based on appearance and aroma)
- Texture (all textural considerations, from cutting and spreading to mouthfeel)
- Flavor (taste)
- Overall Experience (judges' impression relative to their expectations based on their knowledge of the cheese type and the makers' description)

All criteria are scored and a total score for each cheese is calculated on a weighted scale.

## Entry Information

- The judging will take place on Friday, September 6, 2024 at Maine Tasting Center in Wiscasset.
- All awards will be announced at the Cheese Festival on Sunday, September 8 in Pittsfield.
- Entry forms will be accepted between now and August 30, 2024. Do not send cheese with your entry form. Please send your entry form via either regular mail or email to:

Maine Tasting Center  
506 Old Bath Rd  
Wiscasset, ME 04578

OR

[caroline@mainetastingcenter.com](mailto:caroline@mainetastingcenter.com)

## Cheese Submission Guidelines

While entries will be accepted until the August 30th deadline date, it would be very helpful to us if you could submit your entry forms AS SOON AS POSSIBLE so that we may better plan for this event.

- For each cheese entered, please submit **two pieces or tubs of cheese optimally 4-8 oz each.** (*If you are entering a cheese for the People's Choice award, please submit two pounds of that cheese in addition to your entries in the main competition*).
- **Please send your cheeses for judging directly to Maine Tasting Center between Monday, September 2nd and Thursday, September 5th.** We will rely on all entrants to select the best way to get your cheeses to us in the best condition possible and at peak ripeness where that is an issue. You may ship them or deliver them in person. *Receiving hours are from 11:00am to 5:00pm daily.* We have ample refrigeration to store your cheeses, but feel free to offer special handling instructions if necessary.
- We will work with you if you have special circumstances that we are able to accommodate. If you have any unique concerns, please contact Caroline Chung at [caroline@mainetastingcenter.com](mailto:caroline@mainetastingcenter.com)

## Maine Cheese Awards 2024 Entry Form

Creamery Name

Town

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Contact Name

Email Address

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Cheese Name	Category	Please describe your cheese (style, flavor profile, and/or unique characteristics)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
OPTIONAL – People’s Choice Award		
9		N/A