

Cheese Tasting at the Reypenaer Tasting Room in Amsterdam

by Jan Ross | Food, Food blog | 0 Comments



Houseboats are scattered everywhere on the Amsterdam canals.

We stepped out of one of the ubiquitous Amsterdam canal boats onto the cobblestone path which ran beside one of the many scenic canals in the city. Sometimes referred to as “the Venice of the North”, canals run everywhere throughout this beautiful European city and are one of the main modes of transportation as well as the home for many charming houseboats.

Many-leveled warehouses with big windows which had been converted to homes and apartments overlooked the canal and hundreds of bikes – the transportation of choice in Amsterdam – lined the streets.



Bikes are everywhere!

But we didn't pay much attention to these uniquely Amsterdam sights because we were on a mission. A cheese-tasting mission. Dutch cheese can be found everywhere in Amsterdam in many different forms and you can pretty much have cheese for every meal of the day if you choose – and it will all be delicious! You are probably familiar with the more common Gouda or even rather stinky Limburger but there are plenty of other choices in the Netherlands including Edam, Leerdamer, Leyden, Maaslander, and Parrano cheese, just to name a few.



You can buy cheese at open air markets.

Braving the icy November rain and clutching a note with directions in my hand which included confusing words like Dam/Raadhuisstraat, we headed to the Reypenaer Cheese Tasting Rooms. [Reypenaer](#) makes some of the most delicious Dutch cheese you have ever tasted. They have a 100-year-old warehouse on the Oude Rijn in Woerden where the cheese

matures naturally as it has done for three generations of the family, resulting in a distinctive and complex flavor and aroma. The historic ripening process of the Reypenaer cheeses is unique in the Netherlands and these artisan cheeses are also quite unique.



Different Reypenaer cheeses to sample.

But they also have a lovely little store, tucked away on a side street in the middle of Amsterdam where they sell a variety of cheeses and, in a quiet little basement furnished with wooden tables and chairs like a schoolroom, they have cheese tastings with the guidance of an expert cheese taster. [Each cheese tasting](#) session lasts approximately one hour, and is designed for a maximum of 20 people per tasting. Tasting workshops take place every Wednesday to Sunday throughout the day and the basic introductory workshop costs 7.50 euros per person. There is also an advanced tasting with wine and a connoisseur tasting with wine and port. In addition, they will cater to private groups and parties as well as corporate events.



The Reypanaer cheese tasting classroom.

We shook the rain out of our coats and settled down at our little table for two with several others who had braved the rain all for the love of cheese. We watched a little video clip about cheese and then we began with the sampling. On our small wooden table we had a cutting board with several large chunks of cheese, all with different colors and consistencies. As the cheese taster explained about how the cheese was aged and what we should expect to taste, we cut slices, sampled them and made notes to compare the different experiences so we could decide which cheeses we preferred. The longer the cheeses had been aged, the more crystals formed, which meant the older cheeses were more salty and strong-tasting. It's all a matter of taste as far as which cheese you prefer.



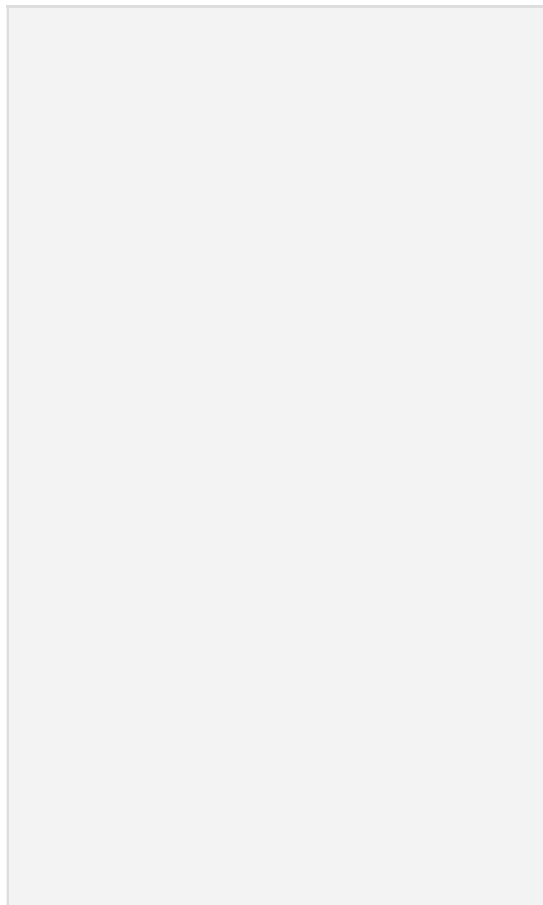
Cutting different cheese samples.

Small glasses of wine were available for those who wanted to pair some wine and cheese and a good time was had by the entire group as we devoured all the different types of cheese trying to decide which was our favorite. The expert cheese taster answered questions about the different cheeses and walked around, talking to us about our choices. The intimate tasting experience was a perfect introduction to Dutch cheeses.



Wine with your cheese?

Once we had sampled our fill, we all went upstairs to the little shop and chose the cheeses we wanted to purchase and take home. If you are in Amsterdam and you like cheese (and who doesn't, really?) you should do this cheese tasting. It was fun and delicious and we totally felt like some sort of expert cheese gourmands while we were participating. The shop is located just a short walk from the Grand Dam where there are lots of little shops and restaurants where you can grab a bite in case you didn't get quite enough cheese!





Make your shopping selections!