

Grilled Cheese Challenge: who will be crowned the grilled cheese sandwich champion?

11 international talents reinvent a timeless classic. See you on 9 June at 10am at the Cheese and Dairy Products Show

The Grilled Cheese Challenge has established itself as one of the highlights of the Cheese and Dairy Products Show. This international competition celebrates a classic comfort food: the grilled cheese sandwich, reimaged by professionals and enthusiasts from around the world.

For this 2nd edition, 11 contestants from a variety of backgrounds (cheese mongers, restaurateurs and discerning food lovers) will compete with a single goal in mind: to create original, skilfully crafted and thoroughly indulgent dishes capable of reinventing this iconic sandwich. See you on 9 June at 10am at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles.

THE GRILLED CHEESE, A UNIVERSAL CLASSIC

Croque-monsieur, toastie, grilled cheese... Whatever you call it, this iconic sandwich is based on a simple principle: melted cheese between two slices of toasted bread.

Popularised in the United States in the early 20th century, it has since established itself as a global staple of street food. Accessible, comforting and endlessly adaptable, the grilled cheese sandwich is currently enjoying a real revival, driven by new culinary trends and its success on social media.

With the **Grilled Cheese Challenge**, this classic dish becomes a true canvas for creativity. In a **battle** format, contestants must devise and prepare recipes within a time limit, showcasing cheese through bold combinations and masterful techniques. The aim: to impress the judges with taste, creativity and visual impact.



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THE 11 CONTESTANTS

- Damien Panero – Fromagerie du Noyer (France – 74)
- Patrick Perraud – Le Comptoir Crémier (France – 69)
- Louis-Charles Vagost – Le Comptoir Maison Lorho (France - 67)
- Michel Hubert – Royaume Souverain des Michels Unis (France - 27)
- Olivier Leclerc – La Cuisine de Comptoir (France - 86)
- Arthur Duhamel – Croque's & Pies (France – 62 & 59)
- Antonin Verhaegen – Hazard Affineurs (Belgium)
- Florian Braham – Le Herve du Vieux Moulin (Belgium)
- Cecily Coffey-Craig – Amateur (United Kingdom)
- Nadia Gourdin – Les Tepuys (Venezuela)
- Mimi (Misao) Kuzé – La Fromagerie (Japan)



CHEESE AND FOOD CULTURE EXPERTS AT THE HEART OF THE EVENT



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The competition was created by recognised professionals from the cheese and gastronomy sectors, bringing together a panel of experts with complementary backgrounds in cheese-making, training, entrepreneurship and international gastronomy. Their combined expertise enables them to recognise the creativity, technical skill and excellence of the entries. The competition was co-created by François Robin, winner of the Meilleur Ouvrier de France Fromager 2011 award.

Official partners of the Grilled Cheese competition, Le Gruyère PDO and Switzerland Cheese Marketing are joining forces with the competition to celebrate Swiss cheese excellence. A delicious and committed partnership that will showcase Swiss cheeses throughout the competition.



A STAR-STUDED JURY TO JUDGE THE ENTRIES

Emma Young – Cheese Consultant

A British expert, Emma Young has over ten years' experience in the world of cheese. An international consultant, trainer and author, she is also known as The Cheese Explorer.

Driss Azzoug – Fromagerie La Meulerie In Marseille

An entrepreneur and cheesemaker of this new generation, he has made a name for himself with his popular creations and his now iconic grilled cheese sandwiches.

Léo Begin – Co-founder of La Fruitière in Brussels

Léo Begin is a cheesemonger in Brussels. He runs a venue that combines a retail cheese shop, a cheese bar and an urban dairy. He is also the 2024 Champion of the Grilled Cheese Challenge.

Florian OnAir – Food influencer & radio presenter

A content creator and culinary explorer, he shares his gastronomic discoveries, ranging from street food to haute cuisine.

See you at the Cheese and Dairy Products Show!

From **7 to 9 June 2026** at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, come and discover this competition and many other events, put a face to the cheeses and meet the people who bring them to life: producers, affineurs, distributors and many others. On the programme: three days of exchanges and discoveries with **270 exhibitors from 15 countries**, featuring tastings, competitions, conferences and gourmet events.

For the first time, the Cheese and Dairy Products Fair will take place in conjunction with the Gourmet Selection Show (7–8 June).

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