

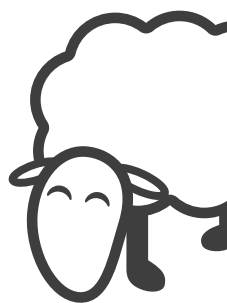


BÉARN & PAYS BASQUE GARANTIS



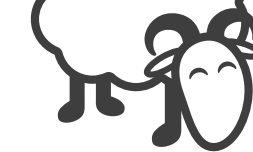
**MEDIA KIT**

September 2019





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► Did you say Ossau-Iraty AOP?

Ossau-Iraty AOP, wheeling out some beautiful stories!

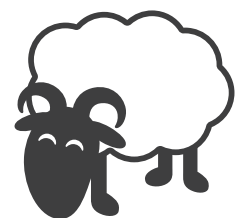
Ossau-Iraty AOP, cheese with great tastes

Ossau-Iraty AOP on the right track

Ossau-Iraty tastings!

Did you say  
**Ossau-Iraty  
AOP?**

Made in Béarn and the Basque Country by milk farmers and creameries, using the milk from three local breeds of sheep following age-old practices, these wheels of uncooked pressed paste are well worth their AOP (Protected Designation of Origin).



**1/3**

Ossau-Iraty AOP is one of the three sheep's milk cheeses in France with an AOP

**1980 - 1996**  
THE YEARS WHEN  
AOC then AOP  
status were granted  
*(in Europe)*

**FEEDING THE  
AOP FLOCKS**



Sheep are pasture-fed, in addition to cereals and fodder produced locally by the farms in the Ossau-Iraty appellation.

**36**  
**HECTARES**  
ON AVERAGE  
PER FARM



**80**



**DAYS MINIMUM TO  
MATURE THE 2-3 KG  
AND 120 DAYS FOR  
THE 4-5 KG**

**BÉARN &  
THE BASQUE  
COUNTRY**

To be granted AOP status, each step of the production process must take place within this geographical area: milk production, cheese making, affinage (or ripening)



Ossau-Iraty milk can only come from the three local breeds of sheep that have adapted to the climate and mountains of Béarn and the Basque Country.

**NON  
GMO**

Sheep are exclusively fed with non-GMO feed

**2**

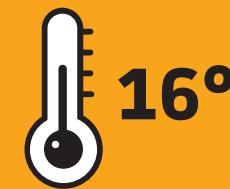
That's how many whole-cheese sizes exist, the 2-3 kg characteristic of the Basque Country and the 4-5 kg from Béarn; although both are free to produce the 2 sizes.

**65% MANECH  
TÊTE NOIRE**  
**17% MANECH  
TÊTE ROUSSE**  
**18% BASCO-  
BÉARNAISE**



WITH 1 LITRE OF MILK  
PER DAY AND PER SHEEP,  
IT THEREFORE REQUIRES  
THE MILK FROM  
**30 SHEEP**  
TO MAKE A  
5 KG WHEEL

**30 GRAMS**  
of Ossau-Iraty  
provide 190 mg  
of **CALCIUM**  
that's close to **1/4**  
OF THE RECOMMENDED  
**DAILY INTAKE**  
for an adult



*OSSAU-IRATY AOP  
CHEESE REACHES ITS  
FULL POTENTIAL AT A  
TEMPERATURE OF 16°C...  
SO TAKE IT OUT OF  
THE FRIDGE BEFORE  
YOUR MEAL*



¾ of the livestock are  
transhumant herds

**1,200**  
**MILK**  
PRODUCERS



**150**  
**FARMSTEAD  
CHEESE MAKERS**

**15/20**

Each producer's cheese is tasted 2 to 4 times a year by an **EXPERT** organoleptic inspection body that assesses sensory quality



**100**  
REST DAYS

Sheep are milked only part of the year (between December and August) to respect their natural seasonality

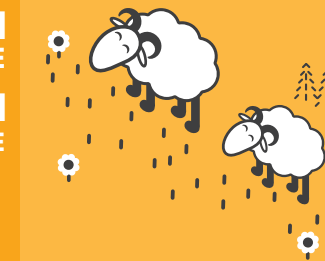
**240**  
**SHEEP**  
ON AVERAGE  
PER FLOCK

**+ OVER  
20 CREAMERIES  
AND AFFINEURS**



**0%**

**OF LACTOSE**  
JUST LIKE ALL LONG-MATURED CHEESE (BEAUFORT, COMTÉ...), OSSAU-IRATY AOP CHEESE NO LONGER CONTAINS ANY LACTOSE AFTER AFFINAGE, IT IS THEREFORE AN IDEAL CHOICE FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM ALLERGIES OR INTOLERANCE



OSSAU-IRATY AOP SHEEP GRAZE IN  
**145,000 HECTARES**  
OF SUMMER MOUNTAIN PASTURES



Did you say Ossau-Iraty AOP?

► **Ossau-Iraty AOP, wheeling out some beautiful stories!**

Ossau-Iraty AOP, cheese with great tastes

Ossau-Iraty AOP on the right track

Ossau-Iraty tastings!

**Ossau-Iraty  
AOP**  
Wheeling out some  
beautiful stories!

## A YOUNG AOP FOR AN AGE-OLD CHEESE

Ossau-Iraty cheese was granted AOC (Controlled Designation of Origin) status in 1980, followed by an AOP (Protected Designation of Origin) in 1996. But don't let these recent dates mislead you, this cheese wasn't born yesterday! Cheese making is an intricate part of history in Béarn and the Basque Country. Written records dating back to the 1st century reveal that sheep's milk cheeses from this area were sold at

markets in Toulouse, and notarised agreements from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century confirm they were made near Oloron.

*Over the centuries, the craft of making sheep's milk cheese has become a traditional practice in the Pyrénées Atlantiques... Today, Ossau-Iraty AOP is emblematic of terroir-based know-how.*



## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS PROTECT AN AOP!

To guarantee authenticity, the specifications for Ossau-Iraty clearly identify the essential requirements for compliance:

- The production area. It covers both the mountainous and hilly parts of Béarn and the Basque Country.
- The milk, which must come from three traditional sheep breeds (see pg. 8) that have adapted to the terroir's climate and relief.
- Seasonality. The sheep's natural lactation cycle is respected and milking is only carried out during part of the year.
- Feed. This is the bedrock of milk quality: sheep are mainly grass-fed with additional fodder that is from the area and non-GMO.
- An age-old cheese making process in 6 steps (see pg. 9).
- Affinage (the ripening process varies in duration according to size) lasts for a minimum 80 days so that aromas can be fully expressed.
- Numerous other requirements are detailed in the specifications: sizes, fat ratios, specific farmstead or mountain pasture characteristics, packaging, etc.

Like all protected food names, the Ossau-Iraty appellation undergoes controls led by the INAO (National Institute of Designations of Origin). Furthermore, the managing trade organisation (the Ossau-Iraty AOP defence syndicate) carries out controls and commissions inspections for its members, using a very significant criterion: taste! Monitoring each and every player in the sector guarantees that all are fully engaged in meeting their commitments.



## BÉARN AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY... LANDS OF OSSAU-IRATY AOP

Ossau-Iraty AOP is 100% local: entirely produced in Béarn and the Basque Country, from sheep farms to cheese making and affinage.

The whole sector's commitment to the quality of the appellation's cheese also has an impact on the region. Indeed, Ossau-Iraty production is providing a living for 2,000 families who, in turn, are contributing to the dynamics of rural life. Ossau-Iraty AOP also represents a traditional way to take care of the mountains.

During the summer transhumance, sheep are naturally contributing to environmental "maintenance". The grazing flocks hinder the development of ferns and brambles. This seasonal migration to high pastures leaves time for the farmers to cultivate their fields, in particular to produce fodder for wintertime. Transhumance also leads to road maintenance, benefiting hikers and walkers.

**A farming tradition packed with benefits.**



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Basco  
Béarnaise

## FOR OSSAU-IRATY AOP, THREE LOCAL SHEEP BREEDS, BAA, BAA, BAA...

They are named Basco Béarnaise, Manech Tête Rousse and Manech Tête Noire. These three local and traditional sheep breeds produce the milk used to make Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese. Having perfectly adapted to the terroir, in particular the humidity, they spend most of their days outdoors, grazing in the pastures.



Manech  
Tête Noire



Manech  
Tête Rousse

## LIFE IS GOOD FOR SHEEP IN OSSAU-IRATY AOP!

Respect. A meaningful word that is woven into the fabric of Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese making. Respect for the terroir, people, know-how and, of course, nature and the livestock's wellbeing. Commencing the month of June, most of the flocks set off on their seasonal migration to mountain pastures. The transhumance begins... some sheep are milked during this period to make mountain farmstead Ossau-Iraty cheese, distinctively flavoured due to the sheep's diet in the mountain pastures, and now easily identifiable thanks to a specific mark on the wheel. For the other sheep, it's the start of their holiday.

They are rapidly joined by the others as milking is put on pause for a minimum of 100 days while waiting for the lambs and the beginning of a new cycle.

## AN UNCOOKED PRESSED PASTE THAT TAKES ITS TIME

Behind the protected name Ossau-Iraty are three trades: sheep farmer, cheese maker and affineur. All of these professionals work within the appellation's geographical area, defined in the AOP specification.

It all begins with **sheep farmers**. A livestock breeder and milk producer, he looks after his sheep. **The highlight of the year: lambing.** Giving birth is necessary for ewes to produce milk. They nourish their lambs during 3 weeks to 1 month. Once they are separated from their offspring (which are mainly sold under Label Rouge Agneau des Pyrénées that has an IGP), they are milked in the morning and evening. This is the milk used to make Ossau-Iraty AOP. **It will be transformed into Ossau-Iraty by the breeder in his farm or by a creamery after being collected from several farms.** The latter can be of various sizes: from co-operatives working with around twenty milk producers to others working with 500 farms.



Whatever the size, Ossau-Iraty AOP **cheese makers** follow this 6-step process to the letter.

## 01 COAGULATION

During coagulation, the milk is heated to between 28 and 35°C. Rennet is added to make the milk curdle and solidify.

## 02 CUTTING

The curd is evenly cut in order to facilitate draining.

## 03 STIRRING AND COOKING

It is then time to stir and cook to separate the curds from the whey.

## 04 MOULDING, PRESSING AND IDENTIFICATION

The curds are placed into perforated moulds, then pressed and drained. They are kept for 8 to 10 days, at 20°C, forming their final shape before being ready to salt. It is during this step that the wheel is marked with the stamp that identifies and guarantees its origin.

## 05 SALTING

The cheese is salted for 24 hours, to enhance preservation and flavour.

Then it's time for the **affineurs** to play their role.

## 06 AFFINAGE

Placed in damp caves (over 75% humidity), attention is paid to regularly turning and rubbing the cheese. The rind forms, the aromas develop. Affinage can last from a minimum 2.5 months to 1 year or more. The AOP specification requires affinage to last a minimum 80 days for 2 kg wheels and a minimum 120 days for 4 kg wheels. The affineur plays an essential role, giving the final touch to the Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese: **its natural rind.**





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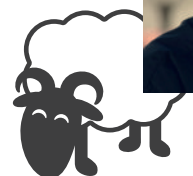


## AOP Ossau-Iraty cheese with great tastes

With almost 4,000 tonnes of Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese produced every year, including over 330 tonnes of raw milk creamery cheese, over 410 tonnes of farmstead cheese, 1,200 milk producers, 150 farmers and twenty or so manufacturers of dairy products and affineurs,

... there is an AOP Ossau-Iraty cheese to suit everyone's tastes all year round!

Although its subtle flavour is always crowned with hints of hazelnut, it varies according to the work of the shepherds, cheese makers and affineurs.



**THE TERROIR AND A SENSE OF TRADITION PARTICULARLY INSPIRE ME. I LOVE THE PRODUCTS FROM MY REGION, LIKE OSSAU-IRATY. I REINTERPRET THEM BY ADDING MY SPECIAL TOUCH: IT'S THE FOUNDATION THAT ENABLES ME TO GIVE FREE REIN TO MY IMAGINATION. IN MY OPINION, THE AOP MEANS YOU CAN'T GO WRONG: IT'S A GUARANTEE OF QUALITY. »**

Fabrice Idiart,  
 Chef at the Illura Restaurant in Saint-Jean-de-Luz



**Milk-fed veal from the Aldudes, wheelks and Ossau-Iraty »**



**Head of veal Orloff with Ossau-Iraty AOP »**



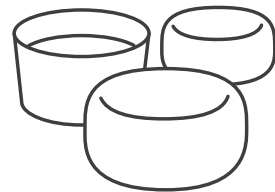
**A PRODUCT LIKE OSSAU-IRATY AOP IS PART OF OUR HERITAGE. IT ENABLES MY WORK AS A CHEF TO BECOME PART OF A STORY. FOR OUR CLIENTS, ITS PROOF OF QUALITY, A WAY OF SHOWING THEM THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH RECOGNISED PRODUCTS MADE LOCALLY, IN THE FARMS THAT SURROUND MY AUBERGE. »**

Antoine Chépy,  
 chef at the Auberge Haraneko Borda in Itxassou



## RECOGNISABLE SIGNS

Ossau-Iraty AOP can be recognised at first glance thanks to its gold and red strip inspired by the colours of its terroir. Three logos have been established for the packaging and cheese wheel rinds are hallmarked with one of the logos in order to clearly distinguish farmstead Ossau-Iraty AOP cheeses from those made in a creamery, and Ossau-Iraty AOP mountain cheese. The front view of the sheep's head symbolises farmstead Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese (exclusively raw milk), the side view of a sheep's head is synonymous with Ossau-Iraty cheese made by creameries (with raw or thermised milk), while an edelweiss in a mountain represents mountain farmstead Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese; the latter is always accompanied by a front view of a sheep's head as it is a farmstead cheese.



### OSSAU-IRATY AOP

Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese can be made from raw or thermised milk. With a natural, rather pale rind that can be uniform or mottled, a white paste with or without openings, a supple, melting and even creamy texture, it has a light balanced taste. After a long ripening period, its aromas are pronounced and its texture is firm, without being overly so.

### BASQUE FARMSTEAD OSSAU-IRATY AOP

These wheels can weigh about 2 kg, have a dry rind that varies from yellow ochre to ash grey, an ivory or sometimes light yellow paste, and a firm texture. Their fragrance is reminiscent of dried grass or straw. This cheese's multiple aromas can vary between dried fruit and plants such as hay or fern with that typical note of sheep's milk cheese.

### BEARNESE FARMSTEAD OSSAU-IRATY AOP

Farmstead producers in the Bearnese valleys make larger wheels that weigh about 4 kg, ideal for longer affinage. These cheeses have a thin, moist and sticky rind that is orangey-red in colour, although it may become browner; the paste varies from white to yellow and it has a stronger fragrance sometimes evocative of undergrowth. They have a smooth, fresh and melting texture.

Mixed with their gamey aroma are more floral and delicately fruity notes that linger on the palate.

### MOUNTAIN FARMSTEAD OSSAU-IRATY AOP

This raw milk cheese is made with sheep's milk obtained during the transhumance period so its flavour is characterized by hints of mountain plants and flowers.

This speciality can now be recognised by its specific hallmark.

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Ossau-Iraty AOP, cheese with great tastes  
▶ **Ossau-Iraty AOP on the right track**  
Ossau-Iraty tastings!

## On the AOP Ossau-Iraty cheese road

It's when travelling along the Ossau-Iraty AOP Cheese Route that the work of all the stakeholders in this dynamic sector can be best appreciated. The 200-kilometre circuit between Saint-Jean-de-Luz in the Basque Country and the Col d'Aubisque in Béarn provides an opportunity to meet the farmers, cheese makers and affineurs in 110 different stopovers to discover the secrets of Ossau-Iraty. **Each one is the perfect occasion to taste the cheeses, chat with the experts and, of course, buy this unique Ossau-Iraty AOP cheese directly from the professionals.**

The Ossau-Iraty AOP Syndicate provides a detailed map with opening times of the different stopovers. It is available in local tourist information offices and other tourist establishments. **It can also be downloaded from the website [ossau-iraty.fr](http://ossau-iraty.fr)**

The Cheese Route has other fun surprises in store with special events, meals and entertainment being organized from time to time. It is also a golden opportunity to admire the outstanding landscapes, visit natural sites, monuments and not-to-be missed villages in Béarn and the Basque Country.

**For more wonderful stories, tips and recipes, and to prepare your itinerary along the Ossau-Iraty AOP Cheese Route, just browse the website [ossau-iraty.fr](http://ossau-iraty.fr)**





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## Tasting Ossau-Iraty AOP

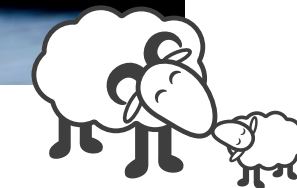


There's no better way to be introduced to Ossau-Iraty AOP than by tasting it. Don't hesitate to contact us so you can discover the different varieties.

**CONTACT SOPHIE CASTAING:**  
[sophie@happy-com.site](mailto:sophie@happy-com.site)  
[+33 \(0\)6 70 70 33 38](tel:+33670703338)



We have numerous recipes to try:  
 tapas, starters, main dishes, desserts.  
 Just ask!







**BÉARN & PAYS BASQUE GARANTIS**

## **FOLLOW US**

   **#OSSAUIRATY**

## **PRESS CONTACT**

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**PHOTOS, VIDEOS, RECIPES ON [OSSAU-IRATY.FR/PRESSE](http://OSSAU-IRATY.FR/PRESSE)**

