

An essential part of the cheesemonger's toolkit



When it comes to aging and caring for cheese, a brush is an important tool for both affineur (ager of cheese) and cheesemonger. During aging, the rinds of natural rind cheeses are formed from the biodiversity of mold, yeast, and other microbes present in the cheese and the atmosphere of the aging room. Cheese cave workers pat and brush the rinds of cheese not to remove the mold growth, but to encourage more mold and microbe development, which contributes to the flavor profile and texture of the cheese. An entire ecosystem is constantly ebbing and flowing both within the paste and on top of the rind. This process continues while the cheese is shipped, stored, and displayed, and only concludes when the cheese is consumed.



You might be thinking, “I’m a cheesemonger. Why do I need this tool?” Though mold growth is a normal and expected part of cheesemaking, you may receive natural rind cheeses that have excess surface mold that you’d like to remove before cutting. A brush is often the best tool for this task – used properly, it is gentle, effective, and easy to clean.



Brushing cheese is an effective way of removing mold, but not all cheeses will benefit from this method of cleaning - always use discretion when deciding to brush any particular cheese.

Cheeses with a hard, dry rind and low moisture cheeses like Pecorino Toscano Aged, Parmigiano Reggiano, and Manchego would be appropriate to use a cheese brush on.

Recommended steps to follow when brushing cheese:

1. Wash your hands
2. Clean and sanitize your work surface
3. Put on gloves
4. Place butcher paper on top of work surface
5. With a clean and dry brush, carefully brush the surface of the cheese rind, brushing onto the butcher paper. Use gentle pressure as you don't want to damage the rind, and only increase pressure once you see how the rind responds. Do not scrub!
6. Move cheese wheel to cutting station
7. Carefully fold and dispose of the butcher paper
8. Clean and sanitize the work surface
9. Brush must be cleaned and dried before using again
10. To clean, place face up in dishwasher (top rack if applicable) and run on highest heat setting
11. Once clean, give brush a good shake to remove excess liquid. Hang to dry completely before using again