

Cheese Country Driving Tour

Of course the entire state of Wisconsin is famous for cheese. After football fans started wearing those yellow wedge-shaped foam hats in support of our favorite team, we became officially and affectionately known as “cheeseheads.” And we consider the nickname a compliment!

Here in southern Wisconsin, we are also cheese eaters; cheese lovers; and, most importantly, cheesemakers. This tour along scenic back roads and over rolling hills also highlights history, outdoor recreation, and kid-friendly stops along the way. Another way to enjoy the scenery of Cheese Country is by taking an off-road trip on the

Cheese Country Trail—a multi-use trail (popular with ATVs) running through Green, Lafayette, and Iowa Counties.

Begin your tour of Cheese Country in **BRODHEAD**. Climb on your bicycle and ride just north of the city on the Sugar River Trail to the replica Clarence Covered Bridge. In addition to an engine and caboose, open for exploration, the Brodhead Depot Museum offers lots of local history. Brodhead Depot Museum, 1108 1st Center Avenue. 608.897.4150. Take Highway 11/81 west to Juda.

CHEESE STOPS

- Decatur Dairy, Inc.
W1668 Cty Rd F | 608.897.2777
- Maple Leaf Cheese Factory Outlet
W2616 Hwy 11/81 | 608.934.1237

Continue west on Highway 11/81 to Monroe.

MONROE – Start downtown on Monroe’s Historic Courthouse Square, an eclectic shopping district surrounding the majestic 1891 Green County Courthouse. Stop in for a Limburger-with-onion-on-rye sandwich at Baumgartner’s Cheese Store and Tavern. Just west of the square is the Monroe Arts Center, featuring performing arts and an exhibition gallery. Get a taste of Monroe’s Swiss history at Turner Hall, just two blocks south of the square.

CHEESE STOPS

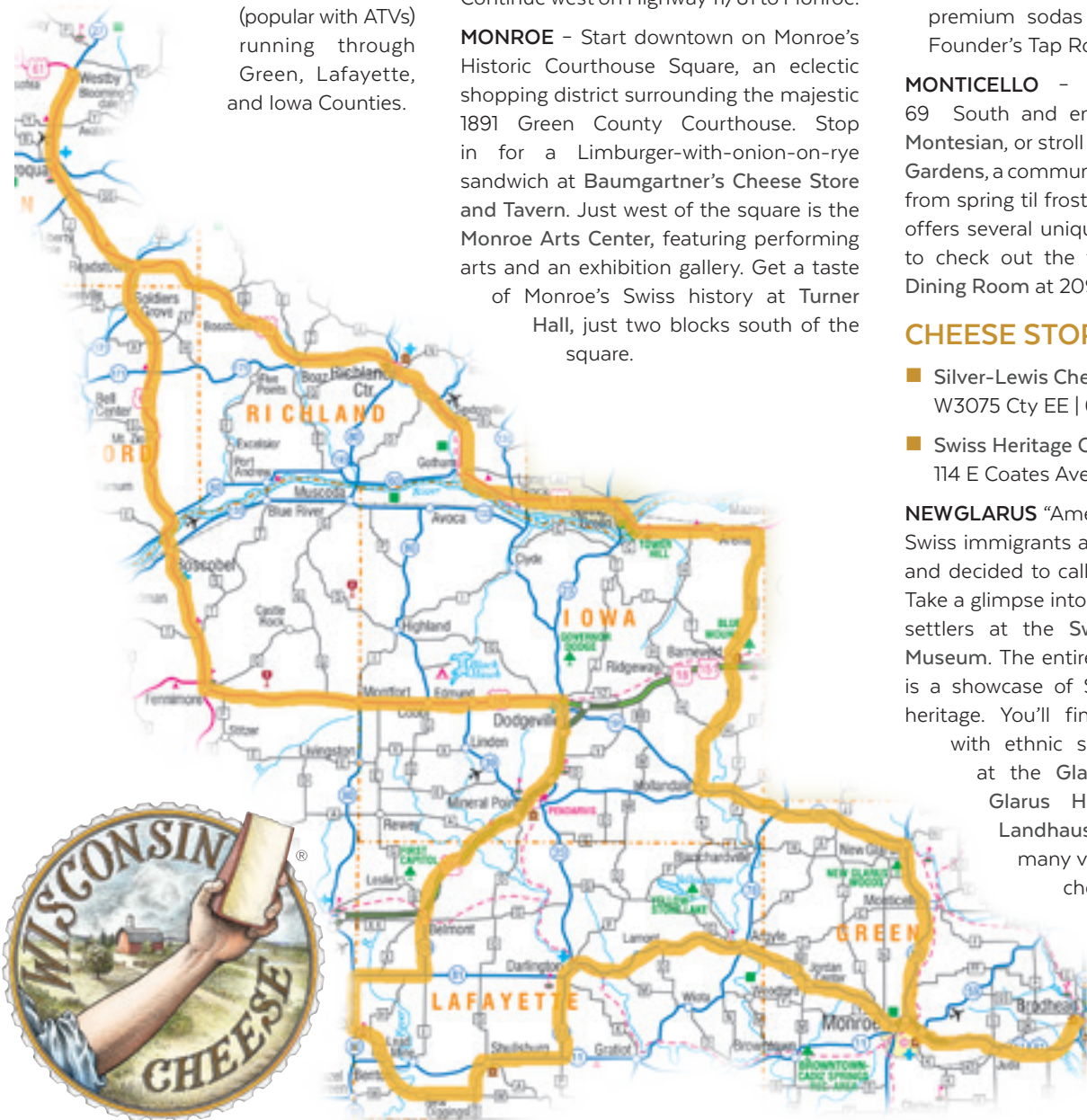
- Alp and Dell Cheese | 657 2nd Street (intersection of Highway 69 south and Highway 11/81) | 608.328.3355 | **FREE TOUR!** Visit weekday mornings to see cheesemaking in action.
- National Historic Cheesemaking Center & Imobersteg Farmstead Factory, 2018 6th Avenue. (Highway 69 South) – tracing the path to fame as the epicenter of Wisconsin cheesemaking.
- Minhas Craft Brewery, 1208 14th Avenue. 608.325.3191 | Take the “taster’s tour” and witness the brewing process at the nation’s second-oldest family-owned brewery. Beer, plus five fun flavors of premium sodas can be found in the Founder’s Tap Room.

MONTICELLO – Stop along Highway 69 South and enjoy the view of Lake Montesian, or stroll through the Montesian Gardens, a community garden with blooms from spring til frost. Downtown Monticello offers several unique restaurants; be sure to check out the textile displays at the Dining Room at 209 Main.

CHEESE STOPS

- Silver-Lewis Cheese
W3075 Cty EE | 608.938.4813
- Swiss Heritage Cheese, Inc.
114 E Coates Ave | 608.938.4455

NEWGLARUS “America’s Little Switzerland” Swiss immigrants admired the hilly region and decided to call it home in the 1840s. Take a glimpse into the lives of those early settlers at the Swiss Historical Village Museum. The entire village of New Glarus is a showcase of Swiss architecture and heritage. You’ll find several restaurants with ethnic specialties. Try fondue at the Glarner Stube, the New Glarus Hotel, or the Chalet Landhaus Restaurant. Taste many varieties of locally made cheese, including Braun Suisse Kase (made exclusively from the milk of Brown Swiss cows) downtown at Maple Leaf Cheese and Chocolate.





FUN FOR KIDS!

- Swiss Historical Village Museum
612 7th Ave | 608.527.2317
- Swissland Mini Golf | 700 Hwy 69
South 608.527.5605 | Travel on Hwy 39
west out of New Glarus.

HOLLANDALE FREE TOUR!

Nick Engelbert’s Grandview, located one-half mile west of Hollandale on Highway 39, is a tribute to the artistic efforts of a man who created more than 40 concrete folk art sculptures in his yard. The quirky “monkey tree” is a tribute to the Engelbert family.

Travel on County K north from Hollandale, turn left on Langberry Road.

BARNEVELD - You’ll know you’re in the right place when you see lush hillsides covered with grape vines. In addition to wine tasting and tours, Botham Vineyards has an expansive terrace perfect for picnic. They’ll help you pair a bottle of wine with some award winning locally made cheese. Continue north on County K, turn right on Mounds Park Road.

SCENIC VIEW! Climb the observation towers at Blue Mound State Park for fantastic panoramic views of the area.

Continue north on County K, turn left on Highway 14.

ARENA - A giant mouse on the front lawn marks the home of Arena Cheese. Step inside to view the cheesemaking process and munch some squeaky fresh cheese curds. Further west on Highway 14, you’ll discover two farm markets. Heck’s Market Place is famous for their fall display of more than 8,000 pumpkins. Peck’s Farm Market offers loads of fresh produce, baked goods, and preserves. Kids love the petting zoo with all sizes and types of animals ranging from giant llamas to the tiniest of pygmy goats.

SPRING GREEN is an artisan’s haven, with numerous shops and studios. Check out the Wisconsin Artists Showcase on South Washington Street, located in a restored 1900s Wisconsin cheese warehouse. If you’re hungry, locals heartily recommend the “Ms. Ruthie” sandwich at The Shed, named in honor of a bartender employed there for nearly three decades. Work off those calories on the long, steep climb up to the smelter house at nearby Tower Hill State Park. There you will discover how lead was melted, poured down the 180-foot tower to the cool water below, and formed into lead shot in the mid-1800s.

SCENIC VIEW! A short half hour ride on Highway 14 West to Highway 60 West to Highway 80 South will bring you into Muscoda where you will find Meister Cheese. For a return trip on the other side of the Wisconsin River, take Highway 133 East to Highway 130 North which brings you back to Highway 14. Take Highway 23

just south of Spring Green for a great view of the “Point of Infinity” at nearby House on the Rock.

FUN FOR KIDS! Climb aboard the 1952 Boeing C-97 (Strato-Cruiser) at the Don Q Inn and check out the instrument panel in the cockpit or imagine trying to get a good night’s sleep on the “bunk beds.” The plane was used to transport troops and cargo during the Korean War. Look closely for the signature of actress Farah Fawcett, who autographed the plane when it was used for a car commercial.

CHEESE STOP

- Nordic Creamery | S2246 Langaard Lane, Westby | 608.634.3199 | Follow the signs off Hwy 14 between Westby and Coon Valley

DODGEVILLE - namesake Henry Dodge, first Governor of the Wisconsin Territory. Built in 1859, the Iowa County Courthouse is the oldest continuously operating courthouse in the state. Satisfy your sweet tooth just down the street with a square ice cream cone at Corner Drug Store. You can even stop in to check your email in the lobby at the Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce, 338 N. Iowa St.

MINERAL POINT - “The place where Wisconsin began” is home to numerous artisan studios and galleries, plus an assortment of other shops featuring coffees, gifts, books, toys, and cheese. Stop for some traditional homemade Cornish fare or enjoy a sandwich at Pointer Cafe.





CHEESE STOP

- Hook’s Cheese, 320 Commerce Street, 608.987.3259
- Mineral Point Opera House, 139 High Street, 608.987.2642. Current movies every weekend, plus special events all year.
- Mineral Point Railroad Museum, 11 Commerce Street, 608.987.2769. Oldest depot in Wisconsin, featuring many railroad artifacts. Open 10am-4pm, Thursday through Sunday.
- Orchard Lawn/Gundry House Museum, 2 blocks east of the water tower on Madison Street, 608.987.2884. Guided tours June - September.

Take Highway 151 south from Mineral Point to Belmont. The First Capitol is located on County Road G.

BELMONT - First capitol for the Wisconsin Territory in 1836. Take a drive through this tiny hamlet for a firsthand look at where a hardy group of fledgling legislators founded territorial Wisconsin’s government. Lawmakers huddled in the cold in the fall and winter of 1836 to build the framework of law and order that would evolve into the State of Wisconsin 12 years later. Stop in at **Montchevre Cheese** and try fresh goat cheese, goat brie, or chevre in blue.

CHEESE STOP

- Montchevre-Betin, 330 Penn Street, Belmont, 608.762.5878
- Take Highway 126 to Highway 81. Go east to Highway 80, then south to Cuba City.

- Gile Cheese, 116 N. Main Street, Cuba City 608.744.3456, named Tri-State’s #1 Cheese Store, making 31 varieties of specialty cheeses.

From Cuba City take County H east to County J. Travel on County J south through Benton to County W and east to New Diggings.

NEW DIGGINGS - In 1824, the lead rush was on, and prospectors traveled up the Fever River from Galena, Illinois—the “old” diggings—to seek riches at the “new” diggings. Hard to believe, but in its heyday, New Diggings had more people than Chicago! Relax outside on the porch at **Anton’s Bar**, and discover what “supersize” really means as they grill up a Macho Burger.

St. Augustine’s Church stands just as it did when Father Mazzuchelli gave mass, from the imported Italian sculptures, to the stained glass windows. Look closely at the right side of the altar for the secret passageway built into it for quick escapes in case of Indian attacks. Open Sundays May 31 through September, 1-4 p.m. or by appointment by calling 608.744.3438 or 608.854.2396.

Take County W east to County O. Take County O north to Shullsburg.

SHULLSBURG - Home to **Shullsburg Cheese** since 1938. The Irish town namesake comes from Jessie Shull, a fur trader and lead miner. Founded in 1827, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli platted the community and named the streets Friendship, Charity, Justice, Judgement, Mercy and Hope. The Water Street Business District is home to a diverse and eclectic group of shops, restaurants, and lodging establishments.

FUN FOR KIDS! Gravity Hill. Drive south from Shullsburg past the water tower and check out this eyebrow-raising phenomena about one mile south on County Highway U. Stop your southbound vehicle next to the curve/25-mph sign. Put the vehicle in neutral, and roll backward UP the hill. Honest! (This is a public highway so watch for other vehicles.)

Take Highway 11 east to **Roelli Cheese**, 15982 Road 11, 800.575.4372, an artisan cheese factory and retail store that has been in business for over 100 years. Turn

left on Highway 23 north to Darlington.

DARLINGTON - **Lafayette County Courthouse**, 627 Washington Street, 608.776.4171. Built in 1905, it holds the record as Wisconsin’s oldest active courthouse and features a rotunda made of Tiffany glass. Open weekdays 8 am-430 pm. **Lafayette County Historical Society Museum**, 525 Main Street, 608.776.8340. The museum is noted for their original collection of paintings by Laverne Kammerude, depicting farm scenes and rural life in southwestern Wisconsin from 1910 to 1940. Open daily 1-4 pm, Memorial Day - Labor Day.

CHEESE STOP

If you are interested in touring a cheese factory and local cheese producer...

- Brunkow Cheese, 17975 Hwy F, will show you how cheese is made.

Take Highway 81 east toward Argyle. Turn left on County N and follow to Lake Road. Turn left on Lake Road to Yellowstone Lake.

ARGYLE - Visit **Yellowstone Lake State Park**, with fishing, swimming, and boating on the lake. Stop in for an ice cream cone at the **Dairy Bar**—a seasonal restaurant owned by **Lafayette County Dairy Promotion**.

Partridge Hall/Star Theatre, 200 South State Street, 608.543.3960. Unusual bell-shaped trim distinguishes this building (National Register of Historic Places) that once served as the town meeting place. Now a restaurant and antique store.

Return to Monroe on Highway 81.

