





THREE CHEESES, GREEN ONION AND GARLIC ROASTED PINE NUT DIP

I like to hunt Appalachian Ruffed Grouse. Some of my favorite areas are upper peninsula Michigan, Maine and certain areas of the mountains of North Carolina. One of the areas of our mountains that is a favorite of mine is a little community called Lansing in Ashe County. This area holds a number of good grouse lots and is the home of the only cheese making company in the Old North State.

Ashe County Cheese is located in West Jefferson, a small mountain town at the foot of Mt. Jefferson. I have had the pleasure of visiting this store many times while grouse hunting, fly fishing, messing about the area on picnics or dining at Shataly Springs or my favorite mountain hide-away – The Riverhouse. I guess it is the little boy in me that likes to see the cheese being made. It is a treat to watch this process and then step across the street to the main store and purchase the finished product along with any number of other delectable items from our mountains. I think we are fortunate to have a cheese making company in our area and it affords school children and adults an opportunity to see a food making process that generally occurs in states far to our north. Ashe County Cheese makes good cheese in a number of varieties. It seems even more special when you have watched it come to life. Try some!

I never visit Ashe County Cheese without being reminded of that old Southern fairy tale about The Three Little Cheeses. It goes like this...

Once upon a time there were three little cheeses – brothers. The youngest cheese, Lil' Yellow, was a mild cheddar who was a bit of a book-worm and given to fantasy. The middle cheese, Whitey, was a sharp cheddar with a reputation for slick dealing and the truth was not in him. The senior sibling, Ole' Blue, was wise beyond his years, possessed of strong opinions and lived large.

The three cheeses decided to build homes in Cheeseboro, a bedroom community to a large Southern city. Lil' Yellow built a thatched



affair of cheese straws. Whitey built on the lake. His was a rustic dwelling constructed of cheese logs chinked with Cheese Wiz. Ole' Blue built a colonial monstrosity of cheese bricks with cream cheese columns. Ole' Blue also installed a security system that made Fort Knox look like a tree house.

All went well with the brothers until Clyde the cheese monster, the biggest, baddest cat you have ever seen, returned from pillaging other villages in the area. Now Clyde had a thing for cheese and he drooled as he laid his fiendish plans for the three little cheeses. Clyde came calling. Not one to huff and puff, Clyde cut to the chase and advised Lil' Yellow that if Lil' Yellow did not pay the cheese ransom Clyde demanded, that Clyde would "Bite his face off." This message was repeated at the homes of the other two little cheeses.

One of the three little cheeses became a spread, one became a fondue and guess which one lived happily ever after. Wrong! It seems that Lil' Yellow, the mild one, was also a sorcerer and made himself into a beautiful princess, married Clyde, drug him through divorce court and now lives in a villa in Switzerland with the handsome contractor that built Ole' Blue's house and slipped Clyde the security code for the princess' phone number.

Don't you just love fairy tales with happy endings?

This recipe simply combines three of my favorite cheeses (without all the drama) with some of my favorite condiments such as onions, garlic and roasted pine nuts. This recipe makes a nice offering for all occasions running the gamut from longnecks to fine wine. It is simple. It is easy to make and generally enjoyed by all.



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2 ounces packaged blue cheese
4 ounces sharp white cheddar cheese
4 ounces mild yellow cheddar cheese
5 heaping tablespoons sour cream
2 heaping tablespoons mayonnaise
2 tablespoons finely chopped spring onion bulbs
2 tablespoons medium chopped spring onion tops
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 cup pine nuts
12 green olives with pimento centers medium chopped
1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce

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Crumble blue cheese and set aside. Grate white and yellow cheddar cheeses. Remove grated cheeses from food processor and insert chopping blade. Replace grated cheeses in food processor and add crumbled blue cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise and worcestershire sauce. Blend in food processor checking every 15 seconds until you achieve a smooth creamy dip consistency (about 30-45 seconds) that will hold on a cracker or rigid chip. Remove cheese mixture to large mixing bowl and add spring onion tops, bulbs, olives and fold.

Toast nuts with garlic salt over medium heat in medium-sized frying pan for about 3 minutes turning often until nuts are lightly browned. Remove nuts with slotted spoon. Fold nuts into cheese dip with rubber spatula. Total preparation time is approximately 20 minutes.

Makes 16 ounces. Serve on water crackers, plain bagel crisps, plain pita chips or breadsticks.