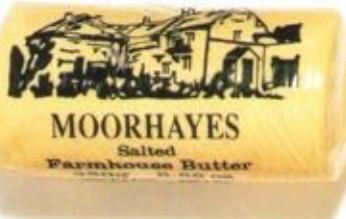


30 Great Butters

The variety of domestic and foreign butters available today—at supermarkets, gourmet stores, and farm markets and directly from creameries both in this country and abroad—is immense. Of the hundred or so butters we sampled during the making of this issue, the following 30 impressed us with their distinctive flavors, textures, and colors. With few exceptions, these butters are free of the added colorings (such as annatto seed extract) and flavorings found in many mass-produced butters. Below, you'll find serving suggestions and recommendations for the best ways to showcase the attributes of these unique butters. Most can be purchased in the United States. (See THE PANTRY, page 91, for ordering information.) —The Editors

Moorhayes Salted Farmhouse Butter (England) The owners of the Moorhayes dairy produce an amazingly distinctive cultured butter from whey instead of cream; it has a dense texture and a subtly vegetal flavor. ▼



H. J. Wijsman & Zonen Preserved Dutch Butter (Netherlands) This long-keeping canned butter, preserved through the addition of extra salt, has an unctuous texture and a rich, cheeselike taste. ▼



Meyenberg European Style Goat Milk Butter (California) Meyenberg, the biggest goats' milk dairy in the U.S., began making this sweet cream butter in 2004, to much acclaim. It has the lively pungency of fresh goat cheese. ▼



Lactantia Light Butter (Ontario) Lactantia is the maker of Canada's best-selling butter. We loved its unsalted "light" butter. With a fat content of only 60 percent, it's not heavy on the tongue and yet possesses a remarkably distinctive, nuanced flavor.



Liberté Goat Milk Butter (Quebec) Good goats' milk butters like this one have subtle flavors utterly distinct from those of cows' milk products. This boldly flavored but balanced butter is excellent melted on steamed vegetables.



Anchor Salted Butter (New Zealand) This flavorful organic butter is made from the milk of cows that graze on open pasture year-round; its color varies from yellow in the spring to off-white in the colder months.

Pamplie Beurre Traditionnel des Deux-Sèvres (France) Made since 1905 by a cooperative of dairy farmers in Poitou-Charentes, this is our favorite cultured butter. It's marked by a floral scent and a sweet, clean taste redolent of hazelnuts. ▼



Meggle Unsalted Alpine Butter (Germany) This ivory-colored sweet cream butter has a sweet, nutty flavor reminiscent of mascarpone cheese's. It's the perfect choice for making fine-crumb pastries like shortbread. ▼



Stirling Unsalted Butter (Ontario) This large dairy company's unsalted sweet cream butter, found in grocery stores across Canada, has a smooth, luxurious consistency and lingers pleasantly on the palate. ▼



Plugrá European Style Butter (Texas) This 82 percent-fat sweet cream butter has been popular with American bakers since the Keller's Creamery introduced it, in 1998, when high-fat butters were not readily available in the U.S. ▼



Delitia Parmigiano Reggiano "Il Burro" (Italy) The same cows' milk that goes into Italy's famed parmesan-reggiano cheese is used for making this cultured butter. Fans of the cheese will instantly notice the presence of its nutty flavor.



Challenge Butter (California) The sweet cream salted butter from Challenge, the most popular butter brand in the western U.S., is richer in flavor and texture than most supermarket sticks. It has a brie-like taste and a sumptuous texture. (Natural flavoring is added.)



PastureLand Summer Gold Salted Butter (Minnesota) This organic butter made from the cream of pasture-fed cows has a distinctly herbaceous flavor that makes it an excellent accompaniment to seafood.



Fattorie Garofalo Burro di Bufala (Italy) This buffalo milk butter, from a maker of excellent buffalo mozzarella, possesses an intense aromatic profile and grassy taste that go well with strong flavors like those of cured meats.

Amul Salted Butter (India) This sweet cream butter from India (to which annatto seed extract has been added, for color) has a slightly sharp, full-bodied taste, pleasantly reminiscent of cheddar cheese's. ▼



Lurpak Salted Butter (Denmark) Made under the supervision of the Danish Dairy Board for more than a hundred years, this cultured butter has a rich taste that's balanced by a light texture and a bright acidity. ▼



Double Devon Cream Butter (England) This lightly salted cultured butter is churned from the same milk used for making Devon's famous clotted cream and has a deep, slightly floral flavor. We use it on crudités in lieu of dip. ▼



Evans' Farmhouse Creamery Butter (New York) Four organic farms supply the milk from which this butter is made. The bright yellow summer butter has a rich, cheesy flavor that we adored. ▼



Le Gall Beurre de Barratte, Sel de Guérande (France) The marshes adjacent to the Breton town of Guérande yield a famously flavorful fleur de sel, which is the star ingredient in this excellent, ultracreamy artisanal butter.



Cabot 83 Unsalted Butter (Vermont) Cabot butters, made with fresh cream from a large cooperative of family farms, routinely win awards. This one, developed for chefs, is rich in fat but has a delicate flavor and mouth-feel.



Kerrygold Pure Irish Butter (Ireland) Kerrygold salted butter is much loved in Ireland. It has a rich, long, and balanced flavor, with an acidic edge. The unsalted version is ideal for baking.



Animal Farm Farmstead Butter (Vermont) This cultured butter, which has a fat content of 87 percent, is made by hand on a 30-acre family farm and has a bold, grassy flavor.

Horizon Organic European Style Butter

Horizon Organic European Style Butter (Colorado) As supermarket butters go, this organic version is hard to beat. Smooth but not overly unctuous on the palate, it has a clean, tangy flavor. ▼



L'Ancêtre Bio Organic Salted Butter (Quebec) This is sweet cream butter at its best. A touch of sourness gives way to a long, creamy finish. We loved this organic butter as a base for brown butter sauce. ▼



Fromagerie Jean-Yves Bordier Beurre de Baratte (France) This Breton creamery's handmade butters have earned a cult following in France (see page 66). A two-step slow-churning process yields a butter of unparalleled smoothness. ▼



Guffanti Burro (Italy) This ultracreamy butter from Lombardy is made by the Guffanti family, which has been making cheeses since 1876. This butter's smooth consistency and fresh flavor make it ideal for baked desserts. ▼



Sagar Pure Ghee (India) Clarified butter, called ghee in India, remains a homemade staple there, but excellent packaged versions are widely available. Sagar ghee has a robust, slightly fermented flavor that lends character to foods cooked in it.



Vermont Butter & Cheese Company Cultured Butter (Vermont) A cooperative of small farms supply the milk for this appealingly sharp-flavored cultured butter, which has a generous fat content of 86 percent.



Lescure Beurre des Charentes (France) "Lescure" is an A.O.C. designation for artisanal butters made in France's Charentes region. Pastry chefs like François Payard covet this butter because it caramelizes well and yields extra-moist crumb in baked desserts.



Straus Organic European Style Sweet Butter (California) This ultrachoice sweet cream butter is made in small batches from the milk of pasture-fed cows (see page 51). We liked its velvety texture and complex herbal notes.