

# Berkswell



Milk type: Sheep

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Milk treatment: Raw

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Coagulant type: Animal rennet

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Location: Near Berkswell, West Midlands

The flavour of this cheese ranges from fruity, fresh acidity to savoury and almost-Parmesan-like. As with many hard sheep's cheeses, its texture is often slightly grainy, though we select cheeses with a pliant, supple consistency whenever possible.

The link with farming has always been an important part of what makes Berkswell special, with Stephen Fletcher managing the herd of several hundred milking sheep.

Berkswell is made by Julie Hay and the Fletcher family at Ram Hall in the West Midlands, not far from Birmingham. It is a hard sheep's cheese and is often compared to Manchego. Unlike Manchego, however, Berkswell is not put into a press during its make; its distinctive shape is the result of its being moulded in a kitchen colander.

The first Berkswell cheeses were developed by Stephen's mother Sheila in the late 1980s. Today, cheesemaker Julie Hay is responsible for orchestrating the cheese side of the business. The appearance of the rind varies dramatically, with an array of beautifully-coloured moulds (from rusty copper to bright yellow) dotting the rind at different times of the year.

We visit Ram Hall once a month to select our batches of Berkswell.

