

322 Cheeses from different countries of Latino America. V. Alvarez*¹ and R. Jimenez-Flores², ¹*The Ohio State University*, ²*DPTC-California Polytechnic State University*.

Latino American (LA) countries have a rich tradition in the production and consumption of cheese, which is called “Queso” and “Queijo” in Spanish and Portuguese, respectively. Cheesemaking in LA region started when the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors brought the first herds to the American continent. Therefore, all cheeses made in LA were originally developed following European cheesemaking procedures. There is a wide variety of cheese products found from the north of Mexico to the south of Argentina due to vast differences in climate, agricultural practices and traditions. LA cheeses can be soft, semi-hard and hard. As in other countries of the world, cheeses are named for the town, region or community in which they are made, thus many cheeses with different names might have practically the same textural and flavor characteristics. Some well known cheeses from LA are queso Añejo, Panela, Cotija, Oaxaca, tipo Manchego from Mexico; fresh cheeses made with whole or partially skimmed milk and pressed are called Queso Prensa, in El Salvador and Venezuela, Queso de Puna in Puerto Rico, Queso Estera in Colombia and Queso Descremado in Costa Rica. Other recognized LA cheeses are Queso Colonia in Uruguay; Queijo Prato (Prato cheese), Requeijao and Minas Frescal in Brazil; Mar de Plata, Mantecoso and Parmesan in Argentina. The important characteristics and processing of these LA cheeses and their relationship with the Hispanic cheeses found in the U.S. market will be reviewed and discussed.

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