

“Quebec Legalizes Raw Milk Cheese; Many Americans Rejoice”

by Jamie Forrest in *Serious Eats*, August 2008

<https://www.seriousseats.com/2008/08/quebec-legalizes-raw-milk-cheeses-canada.html>

First universal health care and now [this](#): The government of Quebec announced last week that it will legalize the sale of raw milk cheeses. This is important and [welcome news for North American cheese lovers](#), especially those like me who live in the Northeast United States and own a car—and several big duffel bags.

Like the U.S., Canada allows the sale of raw milk cheeses aged over 60 days, for the widely held belief that any harmful bacteria will have perished before that time. But now, in a move that is sure to stir up the age-old French-English tensions, **government officials in Quebec have legalized the sale of raw milk cheeses aged fewer than 60 days, citing evidence that says raw milk cheeses produced under proper conditions are no less safe than pasteurized cheeses.**

By sheer coincidence (or not), the feds in Ottawa followed close on the heels of Quebec's proclamation with [one of their own](#): a voluntary recall of a fresh goat cheese sold in Ontario and Quebec that could be contaminated with listeria (no cases of illness were reported).

Ironically, the **recalled cheese was pasteurized**, which to me gives further credence to the notion that pasteurization isn't a panacea for bacterial contamination—proper sanitary conditions during production are. Accompanying the laws that will legalize raw milk cheese in Quebec are stricter sanitary and veterinary requirements for cheesemakers and dairy farmers.

It will be interesting to see the political and gastronomic ramifications. I, for one, will be heading up I-87 in the very near future with minimal clothing packed and lots of trunk space. (Sh, don't tell the border guards!) Hey, if I do get sick from eating all this raw milk cheese, there's always that free, universal health care to take good care of me.