

# COMTÉ News



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Summer 2021



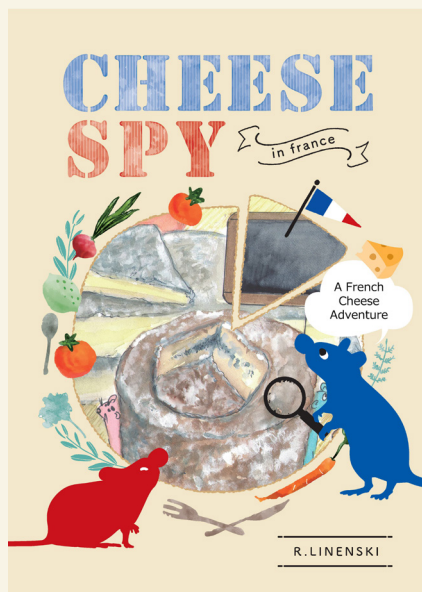
## Interview with Author, Artist and Nutritionist, R. Linenski

About her book, “French Cheese Spy.” This charming tale follows two mice around the French countryside in pursuit of cheese.

Given you are a Japanese artist who lives in Japan, what made you want to write a book about two mice on a mission to investigate cheese in the French countryside?

I love to travel with my husband or sister to Europe whenever I can. (It's been a while!) We have made many good friends there through our shared passion for good food and wine. Since I love to tell stories and paint, this was a way to share my experiences in a fun way. Some of the crazy little stories in the book are based on true events, like driving through the French countryside on a warm summer day in a rented car, suddenly wondering what the pungent smell was. It turned out to be a beautiful cheese forgotten in the trunk by the previous driver!  
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### Are any more "cheese spy" books in the works?

At the moment, there is just the French Cheese Spy which is in Japanese, French and English. Christopher Brown assisted in the translation. These come as an ebook and in English as a special-order softcover. I am currently working on Cheese Spy Italy and plan to have it finished by the end of the year. You can see some of my early illustrations for this on my Instagram page.

### How did you determine which cheeses the mice investigated?

They always say write about what you know and love. In this case, I chose to visit the famous homes of my favorite cheeses like Comté, and it just flowed from there.

### Your illustration style is delightful, yet you also manage to incorporate informational tidbits. What do you hope readers will take away from your books? Do you hope to entertain, educate or a little bit of both?

Thank you! I absolutely want to share my love of cheese in a way that entertains and educates. As an artist, it is fun to create little stories and characters to go with my experiences as I travelled in France, exploring the various cheese regions. I understand that this is a bit of a stretch mixing art and cheese, but this is my way of combining my three passions: art, travel and cheese.

### Are your books geared towards adults, children or both?

My books are for all ages! I understand that the technical part is more than most children can understand but perhaps one

day? And for the parent sharing the story of two cheese-crazy mice with a child, there is something for the "cheese curious" adult to learn about at the same time. I would like to think that they will purchase one of these cheeses and reread the chapters again with a nice glass of wine, while their children sleep.

### What is your favorite cheese? And why?

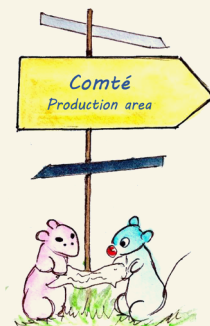
It seriously is Comté! In the Jura region I enjoyed picnics where we had Comté cheese, and it really reminds me of so many happy memories of France. I also love cooking and Comté's "chameleon-like character" — depending on the season it was made —, allows me to use it in a lot of different recipes.

### And how did you come to focus on cheese?

Basically, I'm crazy about cheese! I'm really interested in other countries' food cultures and how that all ties together. That's why I travel whenever I get the chance. I think cheese really indicates a culture. Like goat cheese for instance: Japanese goat cheese is delicate like Japanese food and culture., French chèvre cheese is aromatic like France's food and culture.

### Where can people purchase your book?

They can purchase the eBook online, but I also have a limited number of signed softcover Cheese Spy books for sale. They can be ordered by email ([rlinowski.cheese.spy@gmail.com](mailto:rlinowski.cheese.spy@gmail.com)) or through my Instagram account for \$32 including delivery.



The MASSIF DU Jura is the perfect place to spend your next summer vacation! It is the home of Comté cheese and its new immersive showcase, the Maison du Comté, as well as mountains, lakes, rivers, miles of trails, caves, etc.! There's something for everyone from thrill-seekers to food-lovers. So why not start planning today? Check out our latest video on Instagram to discover what we mean! Go To ([https://instagram.com/stories/comte\\_usa/2633771066366952820?utm\\_source=ig\\_story\\_item\\_share&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://instagram.com/stories/comte_usa/2633771066366952820?utm_source=ig_story_item_share&utm_medium=copy_link)).





## Start Packing CCP's! Comté Scholarship is back this Fall!

Unfortunately, last year the Comté Scholarship could not be offered due to the worldwide pandemic. However, this fall, the Comté Scholarship essay contest is back! For the eighth year, the Comté Cheese Association will offer all American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professionals™ (ACS CCPs™) the chance, once again, to win a trip to France. The prize includes an all-expenses-paid trip to the Comté region to explore the cheese and its culture first-hand, and a \$750 cash stipend. Stay tuned to [www.comte-usa.com](http://www.comte-usa.com) for all the details on how to submit your essay!

## COMTÉ + SESAME TWISTS

**Rebekah Peppler's COMTÉ + SESAME TWISTS Recipe**  
(Reprinted from *À Table* by Rebekah Peppler with permission by Chronicle Books, 2021)

I was in a tiny butcher shop in Burgundy buying pork chops when I saw them: twisty, buttery, cheesy, crunchy prepackaged puff pastry sticks that gave me un coup de coeur. Literally translated to “a hit or shock to the heart,” this phrase describes an instant, intense crush for something. (For people, the French often use the equally evocative term “lightning strike,” un coup de foudre, meaning love at first sight.) My crush came home with me right away, but I haven’t been able to find that particular brand since. So, I wrote this recipe and wish you a lifetime of happiness with her (or him).



photo credit: © Joann Pai. (@sliceofpai on IG)

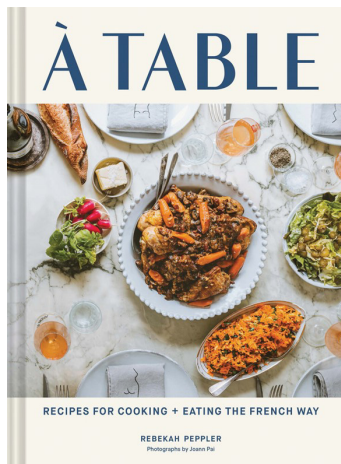
### Makes 32 twists

- One 14-ounce [400 g] package all-butter puff pastry
- 1½ cups [120 g] grated Comté cheese
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- Flaky sea salt

### Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F [200°C]. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Transfer the puff pastry to a lightly floured surface and roll into a 20-by-10-inch [50 by 25 cm] rectangle (about ¼ inch [4 mm] thick). Sprinkle the Comté and sesame seeds on one long half of the dough rectangle, leaving a ¼-inch [6 mm] border around the edges. Fold the other half over the cheese-and-sesame filling. Cut the dough crosswise into 32 strips (each about 2/3 by 5 inches [17 mm by 12 cm]). Transfer the strips to the prepared baking sheets and working with one strip at a time, brush lightly with the beaten egg. Twist each strip and sprinkle with salt. Bake until deeply golden brown, 18 to 25 minutes. Serve warm or transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely, about 15 minutes



## Q&A with Los Angeles and Paris-based Food Stylist, and James Beard Award–nominated Author, Rebekah Pepler, about her recent book *À Table: Recipes for Cooking + Eating the French Way*!

**Q: You've said eating the French way is enjoying the food and the moment. Do you think that concept now is more meaningful to people?**

**A:** I can only truly speak to my experience, of course, but absolutely! Before COVID — as I speak to in *À Table*'s introduction — I hosted weekly dinners in my Paris apartment. In fact, the moments of intimacy, fun, and familiarity you see in the images throughout the book aren't fabricated; the team who worked with me on the photography as well as the faces and hands you see are all regulars at those meals.

I feel like many others have been experiencing the same thing and have begun to really prioritize true enjoyment of a meal and being rooted in the moment — be that by way of the food, the people and energy around the table, the look of candlelight in your dinner companion's eyes.

**Q: Have you found that the French host more dinner parties than Americans? Or is that something you have always done?**

**A:** It's something I've always done but I definitely leaned into it even more with the move to France. That said, that may have something to do with the fact that I have enough space in this apartment for a full-size dining table.

**Q: How did you settle on the 125 recipes you included in the book?**

**A:** Honestly it depends on the recipe. Some of the recipes were borne out of the many research trips I took for *À Table*. For example: I ate pretty much every gougère I saw in Burgundy, spent a few days in Carcassonne learning to make cassoulet with a French friend's family, and took the train from Paris to Marseille to learn about bouillabaisse. Other recipes are for dishes I love and have made and tweaked over time in my life (*À Table*'s ratatouille is a great example of this). And some recipes are the product of moments of inspiration at the market or at a friend's or just the very normal act of standing in front of an open fridge trying to decide what to make for dinner.

**Q: What did you initially hope readers would take away from this book? And did COVID influence that takeaway in any way?**

**A:** What a lovely question, thank you. From the start, I focused on creating a book that is fun, queer, and sexy. I wanted to put something out in the world that provides insight into the France and modern French table that exist today, and also how that can translate to your table anywhere in the world.

While *À Table* is already a deeply personal book, COVID certainly added another layer for me; I imagine it has also influenced the way some readers interact with it.

I got sick with Long Covid just after handing in the manuscript and was extremely sick during the final processes that led up to a book being released into the world. It was extremely hard. Some of the images in the book were taken during my recovery and while readers may not know which ones those are, for me they blend and mark an extremely hard moment in time with something beautiful and full of joy and pleasure and hope. This feeling of reality — while not exactly what I imagined when setting out to write *À Table* — was something I wanted from the onset. I wanted the book to feel real, to be beautiful and useful, to sit on your coffee or bedside table and also be thrown around in the kitchen and passed around the room.

**Q: Aside from Sesame Twists, what are some of your other favorite ways to enjoy Comté?**

**A:** I am not exaggerating when I say that if my fridge doesn't have Comté in it, it feels empty. My favorite weekday lunch is a big, herby green salad and a big Comté slab eaten side-by-side. The XL Gougères in *À Table* are made with Comté, and the French Onion Soup with Cognac is topped with Comté. I don't think it's a coincidence that both those recipes happen to be some of my favorites in the book.

**Q: Where should readers go to buy your book?**

**A:** Please support your favorite independent bookstores! If you want to support mine, here are a few: Now Serving in LA, Books Are Magic in Brooklyn, or Shakespeare and Company in Paris.

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