



## EL ESPARTO QUESO MANCHEGO ARTESANO

### Selected by Will Studd

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#### Origin

La Mancha, Spain

#### Milk Source

Ewe

#### Type

Hard

#### Form

Wheel: 3.4 kg/7.5 lb

Portion: 200g/7oz

#### Pairing

Fino Sherry, Full Bodied Red Wine

Manchego is the most well-known of all Spanish artisan cheeses and its origins lie in the arid plateau of La Mancha. Most examples are now produced on a large industrial scale, using milk collected from hundreds of small dairy farms across the defined PDO region. El Esparto 'Artesano' cheese is a rare exception. Taking its name from the plaited esparto grass belts (traditionally used to bind the young cheese as it drained under heavy stones), each wheel is hand-made using milk collected from a single flock of Manchega ewes.

The cheese is matured for 6-9 months in humid cellars, and the natural brown rind is regularly wiped with olive oil to reduce mould. It contains no artificial colours or mould inhibitors.

Like all farmstead cheese, batches tend to vary with the seasons. Will selects wheels with a slightly sweet, nutty finish and just a hint of the grasses and wild shrubs that grow in the pastures surrounding the farm.



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