

Cheese Making Basics

During the Renaissance and Elizabethan times, cheese was definitely not politically correct. Many people believed that the smell was evil and caused illness. Even Shakespeare was reluctant to eat cheese. Fortunately, the Normans (of France) were obsessed with cheese and they taught the Britons the art of cheese making. The first "Cheese Factory" was in Bern, Switzerland in 1815.

There are thousands of different kinds of cheeses in the world today. Most Americans are only familiar with about twenty cheeses and personally tasted less than ten.... the most commonly used cheeses are processed American cheese and Velveta and actually are not cheese at all.

6 main categories of Cheese: Soft, Hard, Italian, Whey, Goat, Bacteria and mold ripened cheese

Cheese is one of the earliest foods made that is still consumed by people. It dates back to the initial domestications of Animals, est. 9000BC. It was a staple in Biblical times. It is speculated that a nomad poured milk in a sheep's stomach, the reaction of the enzymes, caused the milk to coagulate and form cheese. Cheese was the miracle of how to save milk.

This "basic class" is to increase awareness and the ancient art of cheese and cheese making. (with a little Herbal flair)

In the book Home Cheese Making by Ricki Carrol she notes that "Cheese making is fun" and "Don't be afraid to experiment"....."Cheese is alive." "Just as there is a knack for handling Bread dough, there are tricks to turning milk into cheese.'

Ricki Carrol is the "answer woman of cheese"
Her web site is cheesemaking.com
New England Cheese Making Supply
The book I am using has a trouble shooting section.

Persons doing Demo's are:

Rita Salman Yogurt Cheese
Catherine Harrington Ricotta
Helen Baldwin Goat Cheese
Lori Mann Farmage Blanc

All cheeses are made in similar fashion and involve the same basic steps and technique. It takes exactly the same length of time to make curds from 1000 pounds of milk as it does from 1 pint of milk.

In making cheese always keep a record of what you did....for the history of the outcome.....attached you will find a record keeping sheet.

Milk:

7/8 of milk is water and the rest is milk solids: protein, minerals, milk sugar, milk fat, vitamins and trace elements.

One gal of Milk will make 1lb of hard cheese and 2lbs of soft cheese.

The milk used CAN NOT be ULTRA PASTERIZED indicated as "UP" on the gallon container.

You can use dried milk.

Do not open your milk till time to use and don't use sour milk.

Do not add Chlorinated water in cheese, it damages the protein structure and enzymes are destroyed.

STARTERS "Ripening" the first step in making cheese.

Also, helps preserve the final cheese and assists in flavor development. Starters are cultures that assist in the turning the milk sugar to lactic acid that helps the "rennet" coagulate the milk, expelling whey from the curds. Can make your own, directions in book.

RENNENTS

Substance used to coagulate milk; it contains enzymes that act on the milk protein casein, separating the milk into curd and whey.

Cultures and rennets (liquid or tablets, animal or vegetable) are now made in factories and can be obtained from cheese making supply houses.

Herbal Plant Rennets

Are made by crushing the plant matter and straining it.

Some of them are Yarrow, Stinging Nettle, Cleavers, Thistle Flowers, Safflower Seeds, Fig bark, Mallow, Teasel, Knap Weed, Butterwort Leaves and many more.

Legend has it that in Europe, the butterwort plant (Cheese Flower) was fed to cows just before milking time, causing to milk to coagulate 3 hours later.

ACIDS

Although rennet is used to aid coagulation of most cheeses, acids may be used when making soft "BAG" cheeses: Vinegar, Lemon, Lime, Orange, Citric Acid and Tartaric acid.

CHEESE SALT is non iodized flake salt, added to curds for taste before pressing.

HERBS Best to use fresh. Hard cheese: Cumin & Caraway. Soft Cheeses: Chives, Parsley, Thyme, Garlic, Dill, Oregano, Basil, and Sage. Set in refrigerator a day or two to let permeate the cheese. Dried herbs let set for several days.

There are other additives for stronger favors, hardening, colors and molds. The more complicated the cheese, more the demand to order more sophisticated activators.

EQUIPMENT start "CLEAN"(bacteria can alter the outcome of your hard work)
NO aluminum or cast iron and NO PVC and not LEAD.

- 1 Bowl stainless or glass
- 2 Double boiler or pot for heating water (note size to hold 1-3 gal of milk depending on recipe)
- 3 Colander
- 4 Butter Muslin or Cheese Cloth and twine
- 5 Knife to cut curds (long with round edges)
- 6 Dairy Thermometer (0-220 degrees)(Boiling is 212degrees to set)
- 7 Measuring spoons, stainless is preferred
- 8 Molds and Followers
- 9 Perforated ladle (skimmer)
- 10 Press to drain cheese
- 11 Bucket to catch whey (use the whey in Pizza and Bread Dough)

This presentation is based on the very basics of cheese making. I highly recommend that you get a book to guide you through the process. The process is a science, involving a bit of chemistry, there is a lot more to know. It is fun; you can take it to a more in depth level..... You can even develop recipe for a cheese that is yours.

For more information:

The American Cheese Society
502-574-9950
www.cheesesociety.org

New England Cheesemaking Supply Company
413-628-3808
www.cheesemaking.com

The Home Wine, Beer, and Cheesemaking Shop
800-884-8586
www.homebeerwinecheese.com

Lehman's
888-438-5346
www.Lehmans.com

Moorlands Cheesemakers
44-1749-850-108
www.cheesemaking.co.uk