

First Steps In Cheese Making

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Ingredients:

4 pints milk
1/2 small pot live yoghurt
Rennet (or veg rennet)
Salt

Equipment:

2 large pans
Muslin or cheesecloth
Funnel
Wooden spoons

Equipment for a simple press:

Pop bottle (with top and bottom cut off) or drain pipe
Jar or jar lid which fits snugly into pop bottle/drain pipe
Strong elastic/tyre inner tube/weights

Instructions for cheese:

Heat milk to around 36 °C in pan and remove from heat.

Add the yoghurt straightaway and stir it in well.

Cover the pan and leave for between 30 mins and 1 hour, then add rennet (as directed on packet/bottle). Cover again and leave for about 24 hours.

The milk will have now separated into curds (the solid bit) and whey (the liquid bit). Using a sharp knife cut the curds into cubes about 1in square then carefully reheat to 30 – 36 °C stirring in about 1 tsp of salt. Then using the cloth and funnel, strain off the whey (saving it for gjetost if you want). Allow to drain for a few hours.

Return solids to the cloth in the funnel, cover and leave to drain for a while.

At this point either:

1- Hang over a bowl in the fridge to drain for around 24 hours, which will leave you with a nice cream cheese.

2- Cut top and bottom off pop bottle and place snug fitting jar lid in bottom, stand in pan. Place the cheese, still in the cloth into the cut pop bottle and place another jar/lid on top with weights or rubber/tube stretched over to maintain pressure.

Leave in press for around 24 hours.

Remove from press and unwrap. This will produce a semi-hard, crumbly cheese reminiscent of Wensleydale.

Serving suggestion...

Instructions for Gjetost:

Put the whey in a thick-bottomed pan and simmer, stirring often.

After several hours it will have reduced to a thick brown liquid.

Stir almost constantly until quite thick and fudgey looking, then pour into a cold buttered bowl and whisk while cooling (to prevent it becoming grainy).

It will eventually set; this is gjetost cheese.

These instructions have been formulated from our first attempts at making cheese. It is something that we had wanted to try for ages but had not bothered because we thought it was too complicated and required odd ingredients that we could not get hold of. However, we were happily surprised after our first try how easy it was and how delicious it tasted!

Inspiration for the instructions was gained from these Downsizer posts:

Here, here, here and here.

Further instructions and inspiration can be found at Dr Fankhauser's site.