

BASIC CHEESEMAKING TIPS: What To Do And What To Avoid

DO

DON'T

Sanitation

Use iodophor or other food safe sanitizer for all equipment. Use of boiling water is okay.

The Milk

With either raw or pasteurized milk, use the freshest you can find. Storage is generally detrimental. Homogenized and non-homogenized are both fine.

Adding Ingredients

Dilute ingredients in non-chlorinated water. Stir them thoroughly into the milk with 20 bottom-to-top strokes each. Always use calcium chloride in pasturized milk and reduce starter culture additions in raw milk.

Temperature Control

Use a double boiler and calibrated thermometer when heating milk and mainting set temperatures. Find a warm, safe place in your house for ripening cheeses. The top of the fridge, and the oven with the light on are common spots.

Stretching Curd (Pasta Filata)

Maintain the hot water bath at 170 - 180 degrees F while stretching. Use neoprene coated gloves. Knead the hot curd until it is tacky like dough, then stretch. Cool in an ice bath for a softer texture.

Recipes

Use published authors like Tim Smith and Margaret Morris. The Beverage People distribute free, tested recipes. Cheeseforum.org has a lot of recipes but from random sources. Follow ALL of a recipe's instructions. Little things matter.

Advanced Cheesemaking

Monitoring pH, controlling precise temperature and specific humidity levels are key to "affinage" and advanced cheeses.

Sanitation

Avoid storing cheese in excessively warm conditions or places without air flow---foreign molds may grow.

The Milk

Do not use ultra-pasteurized milk, it may not coagulate. Milk near the expiration date, or from cows in late lactation (generally November/December) may be problematic.

Adding Ingredients

Avoid adding a whole package of culture unless you are certain that is required. Don't use calcium chloride in raw milk. After rennet additions, don't add heat or stir excessively---you may shatter the weak curds.

Temperature Control

When coagulating and acidifying cheeses, don't let them drop below 65 degrees F. Don't overheat the milk after culture addition or they may die. Don't direct heat with a thin-bottom pot. Don't *wing it* without a thermometer.

Stretching Curd (Pasta Filata)

Don't try to stretch the curd before appropriately heating. Don't forget to salt the curd.

Recipes

Avoid internet recipes from untrusted sources. Be careful of recipes calling for single-use packages.

Advanced Cheesemaking

Don't take on aged cheeses until you have created an appropriate "cheese cave" with the necessary environment. The "cave" can be as simple as a box in a temperature stable cellar or a dorm fridge set to cellar temperatures.